ATHLON SPORTS

2023 NFL PREVIEW

PLUS FANTASY PREVIEW

PRO FOOTBALL

Patrick **Mahomes**

Jalen **Hurts**

Aaron **Rodgers**

Now Or NEVER

Some Super Bowl Windows Are About to Close

Breaking THROUGH

Whose Title Drought Is Most In Danger?

- In-Depth Team Previews
- Anonymous Scouting
- Draft Analysis
- 15 Things to Watch in 2023

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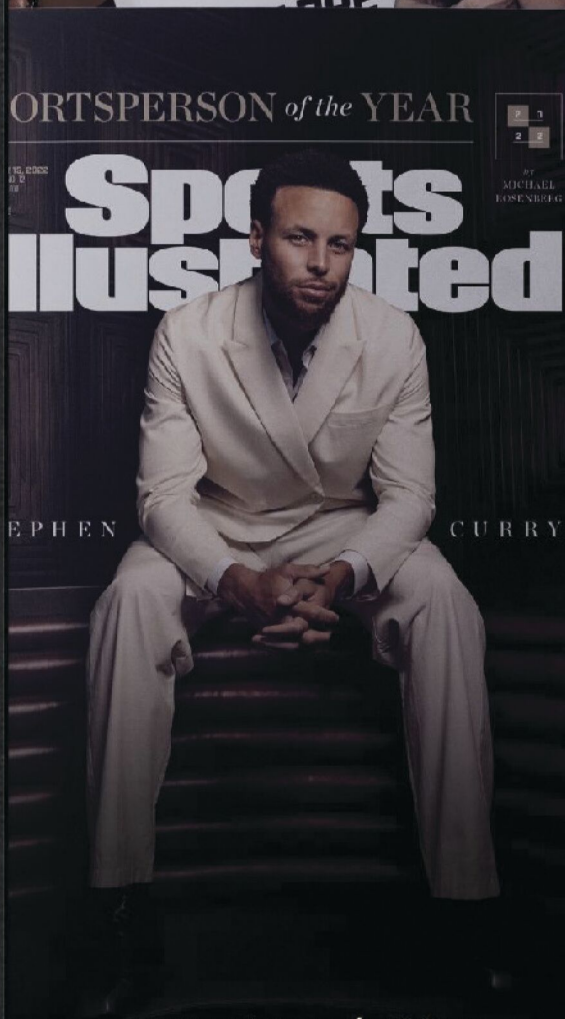

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SUPER CELEBRATIONS ARE NOW SECOND NATURE TO TRAVIS KELCE (L) AND PATRICK MAHOMES. IS THERE ANOTHER CHIEFS PARTY YET TO COME?

PHOTO BY ERIC HARTLINE/USA TODAY SPORTS

EDITOR'S NOTE

Nobody enjoys the cold, cruel dose of reality that smacks every NFL fan from time to time. That reality is some version of this depressing sentence: My team is in a full-on rebuild.

We all know that NFL means Not For Long, and that the fleeting nature of success and the short shelf lives of the players (with some obvious exceptions) make it nearly impossible to achieve sustained excellence without the occasional reset, if not total to-the-studs reno.

I know whereof I speak. As a Titans fan, I am starting to succumb to the realization that my team may be entering a transitional phase (a euphemism for a painful, perhaps lengthy rebuild). The quarterback situation in Nashville is unsettled, Derrick Henry has piled up the miles, we have an understocked receiving room and the Jaguars seem to be ascending to semi-permanent favorite status in the AFC South.

Windows of contention seldom remain open, and this fact is especially true for some teams facing a heightened sense of urgency in 2023.

In his feature story "Now or Never?" writer Gilberto Manzano looks in on those teams for which this season may represent the last chance at Super Bowl glory (for now, anyway). Powerful teams like the 49ers, Eagles and Bills — teams that have come agonizingly close in recent seasons — need to make hay while the sun is shining on their respective franchises. The inevitable alternative may be too painful for fans to think about, but today's realities (salary cap, injuries, retirements) dictate that front offices approach roster management with something resembling a permanent but constantly evolving five-year plan.

Everything in this sport is temporary and transitory, and one poignant reminder of that fact is our annual look back at the NFL Draft class from 10 years ago. Teams that thought they were laying a foundation for a championship with their first-round picks were, in many cases, hit with that cold dose of reality I mentioned earlier.

Of course, at the time you're reading this, your team and my team are both 0-0, and the possibilities remain endless. That's the beauty of this time of year (that, and preview magazines like this one that set the table for another fascinating season). Hope springs eternal, especially for NFL fans during the dog days of summer.

This season, like every other, is replete with storylines. Writer Luke Easterling zeroes in on 15 of them in his feature story, "15 Things to Watch in 2023." Much of the drama, as always, centers on the quarterbacks. The AFC is loaded with 'em, and that's even more true in 2023 with Aaron Rodgers' move to New York. Over in the NFC, there's far more QB uncertainty, as the Bucs transition from the GOAT to, um, something different, and the Bears hope that Justin Fields is more than an electrifying running back who's trying to play quarterback (I happen to think he is). Then there's the saga of Mr. Irrelevant (Brock Purdy) in San Francisco, the dawn of the Jordan Love era in Green Bay and the arrival of No. 1 overall draft pick Bryce Young in Carolina, where height concerns will dog him until he proves them unfounded (probably the first time he steps on the field). Whatever happens, we'll be watching.

Enjoy the magazine, and may your team's window stay open as long as possible.

Rob Doster, Managing Editor

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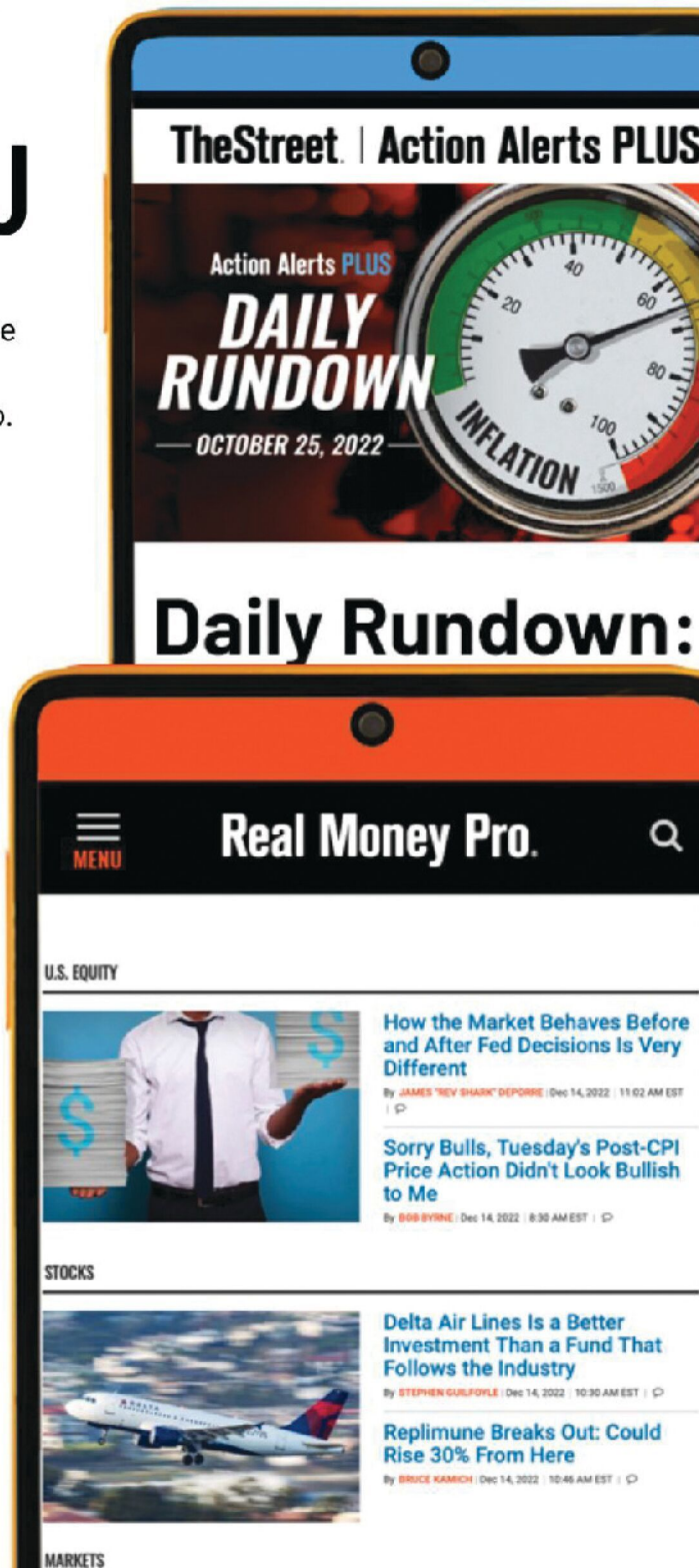

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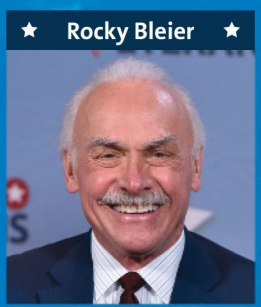

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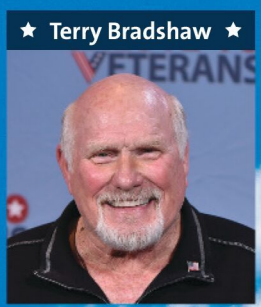

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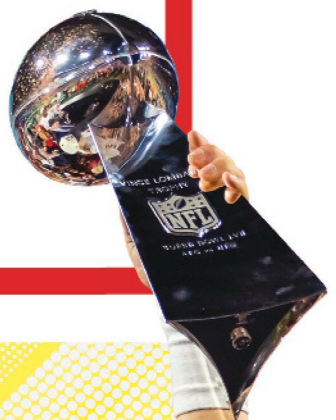
15 THINGS TO WATCH IN 2023

BY LUKE EASTERLING



AFC QB Gauntlet

The balance of power at the game's most important position is clearly tilted toward the AFC, and it doesn't look like that will be changing anytime soon.

Patrick Mahomes is obviously the king of the mountain after a second Lombardi Trophy and Super Bowl MVP in four seasons, but he'll once again have plenty of stiff competition if he wants to get back to the summit again this year.

Joe Burrow's Cincinnati Bengals almost certainly will be back in the mix for the conference title again this season, as will Josh Allen and the Buffalo Bills. Lamar Jackson is back in Baltimore thanks to a massive five-year contract extension with the Ravens, and he'll once again be a force to be reckoned with if he can stay healthy. Trevor Lawrence and the Jags could cause some problems to the top dogs in the group, as could Justin Herbert and the Chargers. The Jets have also joined the chat when it comes to potential title contenders in the AFC, thanks to the arrival of Aaron Rodgers.

What if Tua Tagovailoa returns to his early-season form from last year and avoids the injuries that ended his 2022 campaign prematurely? What if Russell Wilson bounces back from last year's debacle after a much-needed coaching change?

The star power at the marquee position is dazzling. It should make for plenty of must-see TV matchups on the AFC slate this year — and some memorable playoff showdowns.

PATRICK MAHOMES

T-LAW & DUUUUVAAAAAAAL

There might be something special brewing in Jacksonville, as the Jaguars have quickly emerged from the, um, mire of the Urban Meyer era. After an epic nightmare that didn't even last one whole season, Doug Pederson and Co. already have the Jags heading back in the right direction at full speed.

Thanks to a head coach who actually knows what he's doing, a true franchise quarterback in Lawrence who appears to be ready for a breakout campaign and a promising roster full of talent on both sides of the ball, the Jags have all the makings of a dark-horse AFC title contender. That's obviously easier said than done in a loaded conference that features a Murderer's Row of star quarterbacks, but Lawrence can hang with the best of them, and his supporting cast is only getting better.

A dramatic comeback win — rallying from a 27-0 deficit — over the Chargers in the playoffs last year offered fans a glimpse into what this team is capable of, and after another offseason of personnel additions and time spent in the offensive and defensive systems, this should be an even better and more confident club in 2023.

DOUG PEDERSON AND TREVOR LAWRENCE

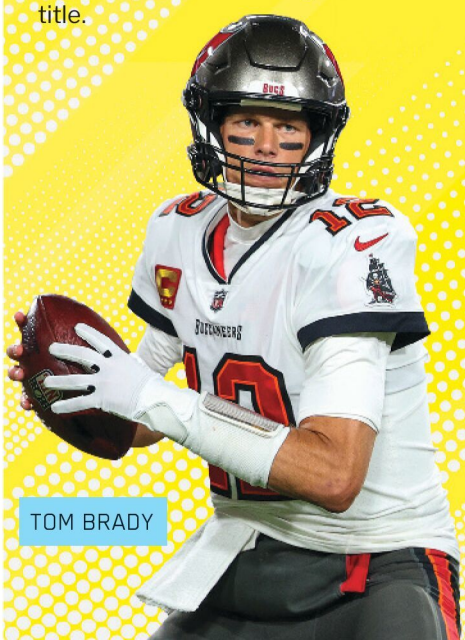
MAHOMES: MARK J. REBILAS-USA TODAY SPORTS; JAGUARS: BOB SELF/FLORIDA TIMES-UNION

FROM BRADY TO BAKER

The GOAT has retired again (for good this time, we think), leaving the Tampa Bay Buccaneers to usher in a new era at quarterback. Their salary cap situation was dire this offseason, thanks to three years of pushing money to the future in order to maximize their championship window with Tom Brady, which forced them to take a more economical route at quarterback this time around.

Enter Baker Mayfield, who signed a cheap one-year deal (worth up to $8.5 million) to compete with 2021 second-round pick Kyle Trask for the starting job. The No. 1 overall pick in the 2018 NFL Draft, Mayfield saw his tenure with the Cleveland Browns cut short by injury and the acquisition of Deshaun Watson. After bouncing between the Carolina Panthers and Los Angeles Rams last season, Mayfield has another chance to prove that he can be an effective starter in the NFL.

Despite any rumors to the contrary, the Bucs have no plans to tank this year for a chance to nab one of the top quarterbacks in the 2024 draft (Caleb Williams, Drake Maye), as evidenced by the rest of their offseason moves that included retaining some of their most important free agents (Lavonte David, Jamel Dean). Mayfield will have the benefit of two Pro Bowl wide receivers in Mike Evans and Chris Godwin — and a more QB-friendly offense under new coordinator Dave Canales than Brady had to work with last year. In perhaps the most winnable division in the NFL, the Bucs seem to think Mayfield can replace Brady at least well enough to compete for a third straight NFC South title.



TOM BRADY

Super Bowl or Bust for Rodgers, Jets

Speaking of Brady, the Jets are hoping to catch the same lightning in a bottle that the GOAT brought to Tampa Bay in 2020, when he took a franchise that hadn't been to the playoffs in 12 years and immediately led them to a Lombardi Trophy in his first season with the team.

AARON RODGERS AND SAUCE GARDNER

After a long standoff leading up to this year's draft, the Packers and Jets finally agreed to a deal that sent four-time MVP Rodgers to New York in return for a package that included a second-round pick this year and a conditional second–round pick next year that can easily become a first-rounder. In addition to the draft pick compensation, the Jets are taking on Rodgers' massive contract in hopes that he can replicate Brady's instant success with his new franchise.

Now, it's Super Bowl or bust for Rodgers and the Jets, a lofty expectation for a team that won its only Super Bowl more than 50 years ago when Broadway Joe made good on his legendary guarantee. Brady brought a more established track record of championship success to Tampa Bay, and he had a better supporting cast, but anything short of a championship will be a failure for Rodgers and the Jets.

Top Rookie QBs

The 2023 NFL Draft class was led by a promising quarterback class, as three signal-callers came off the board in the top four picks.

Alabama's Bryce Young was the No. 1 overall pick to the Carolina Panthers, while Ohio State's C.J. Stroud went No. 2 overall to the Houston Texans. Easily the most intriguing of the bunch, Florida's Anthony Richardson, was the Indianapolis Colts' pick at No. 4 overall.

BRYCE YOUNG AND ROGER GOODELL

All three of these rookie quarterbacks join franchises looking to turn over a new leaf, with new head coaches leading the way. All of them have question marks, from Young's lack of size, to whether Stroud's epic playoff performance against Georgia was an exception instead of a rule, to Richardson's lack of starting experience and consistency. Despite any faults, they all immediately became the best quarterbacks on their respective rosters and should all be expected to start Week 1.

Just as it was leading up to the draft, following these young field generals as they navigate their rookie seasons should be one of the most compelling storylines in the NFL this season.

RODGERS: BRAD PENNER-USA TODAY SPORTS; BRADY: NATHAN RAY SEEBECK-USA TODAY SPORTS; YOUNG: KIRBY LEE-USA TODAY SPORTS

Eagles Reloaded

The Eagles might have fallen short of the ultimate prize last season, but another offseason of reloading what was already one of the NFL's most talented rosters should have this Philly team sitting comfortably among the favorites in the NFC in 2023.

Star quarterback Jalen Hurts has a new long-term contract extension, some key free agents were retained, many of their biggest departures were addressed with quality replacements and another blue-chip draft class added even more young talent to a deep roster. Star corners James Bradberry and Darius Slay are back, and Philadelphia also added three more Georgia Bulldogs to its defense in rookie draft picks Jalen Carter, Nolan Smith and Kelee Ringo. D'Andre Swift and Rashaad Penny will replace Miles Sanders in the offensive backfield, while A.J. Brown and DeVonta Smith will once again form one of the most dynamic receiver tandems in the league.

JALEN HURTS, FLETCHER COX AND A.J. BROWN

Hurts still leads a star-studded offense with playmakers all over the place, and he'll be protected by one of the league's best offensive lines. Philly's defensive front should once again be among the best and deepest in the NFL, which should benefit a back seven that will need to make up for a couple of key losses.

Head coach Nick Sirianni had his team on the doorstep of a championship last year, and it won't be shocking if he takes them all the way this time around.

The Jordan Love Era Begins

For the first time in 30 years, the Green Bay Packers are heading into a season with a starting quarterback not named Brett Favre or Aaron Rodgers. Jordan Love has waited patiently for his turn at the helm and finally will get the chance to prove himself worthy of Green Bay trading up in the first round of the 2020 NFL Draft to make him its future quarterback.

Love will have the benefit of a strong backfield with Aaron Jones and AJ Dillon, as well as plenty of young and talented pass catchers. Christian Watson and Romeo Doubs both showed promise as rookie wide receivers, and the Packers spent three of their top four picks in the 2023 draft on passing-game weapons (wide receiver Jayden Reed, tight ends Luke Musgrave and Tucker Kraft).

The Packers signed Love to a reworked contract extension through 2024. He has shown flashes of potential in limited work over the past three seasons, but the jury is still out on whether or not he can take the torch from Rodgers and keep the Packers in perennial playoff contention.

CAN JUSTIN FIELDS MAKE THE LEAP?

After trading up to take him with the No. 11 overall pick in the 2021 NFL Draft, the Chicago Bears didn't do Justin Fields any favors in his rookie season. With a scheme that refused to play to his strengths, and a lackluster supporting cast, Fields floundered when thrown into the fire after an injury to veteran starter Andy Dalton.

Last season, Fields showed flashes of his sky-high potential, putting up spectacular numbers (1,143 yards, second most by a quarterback in a single season) as a rusher while making incremental improvements as a passer. Still, the talent around him still wasn't enough to unlock his full potential, something the Bears were clearly focused on correcting this offseason.

Armed with the most salary cap space in the entire league, as well as some premium draft resources, the team set about the task of building a much more talented roster to give their franchise quarterback a true opportunity to shine in 2023. Tons of additions have been made on both sides of the ball, including the arrival of star wide receiver DJ Moore from the Carolina Panthers as part of the trade for this year's No. 1 overall pick.

If the play-calling continues to lean into what Fields does best, and the new additions live up to their own expectations, Fields finally could unlock his star power and make the Bears sneaky contenders in the wide-open NFC North.

JORDAN LOVE AND JUSTIN FIELDS

EAGLES: BILL STREICHER-USA TODAY SPORTS; LOVE: JEFF HANISCH-USA TODAY SPORTS; FIELDS: JEROME MIRON-USA TODAY SPORTS

WILL DANIEL JONES LIVE UP TO HIS NEW CONTRACT?

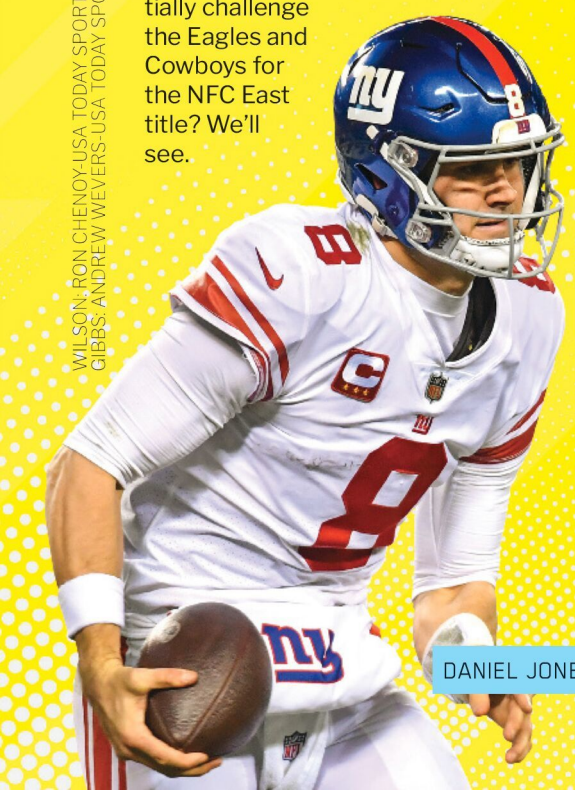
"Danny Dimes" is now "Danny Dollars," as the New York Giants paid a high price this offseason to keep Daniel Jones as their starting quarterback. Jones signed a four-year, $160 million deal ($95 million guaranteed) to remain in New York, and he now carries even higher expectations heading into the 2023 season.

It's a hefty price tag for a quarterback who in four NFL seasons has not eclipsed 3,500 yards (his career high is last year's 3,205) and still hasn't matched the 24 touchdown passes he tossed as a rookie. In fact, Jones has thrown just 36 TD passes combined in the three seasons since that rookie campaign.

The bright side? Jones is still just 25, has thrown only 12 interceptions over the past two seasons and brings added value to the offense with his rushing ability (a career-high 708 yards and seven TDs on the ground last season).

The return of star running back Saquon Barkley will be key, whether on the franchise tag or a long-term extension, and offseason additions Darren Waller, Parris Campbell and third-round pick Jalin Hyatt should add much-needed firepower to a pass-catching group that lacked juice last season.

Will it be enough for Jones to lead the Giants back to the playoffs, and potentially challenge the Eagles and Cowboys for the NFC East title? We'll see.



DANIEL JONES, JAHMYR GIBBS AND BIJAN ROBINSON

WILSON: RON CHENOY-USA TODAY SPORTS; ERIC HARTLINE-USA TODAY SPORTS; GIBBS: ANDREW WEVERS-USA TODAY SPORTS; ROBINSON: MIKALA COMPTON/AMERICAN-STATESMAN

Bounce-Back from Russell Wilson?

RUSSELL WILSON

After sending a king's ransom to the Seattle Seahawks, the 2022 season didn't go as planned for the Denver Broncos and quarterback Russell Wilson, as they struggled to 5-12 and a bottom-five finish in the league.

Wilson never looked comfortable in new head coach Nathaniel Hackett's offense, and frustrations mounted throughout the season, eventually leading to Hackett's firing in December.

Already heavily invested in Wilson as their franchise quarterback, the Broncos made yet another bold move this offseason, sending a first-round pick in the 2023 NFL Draft to the New Orleans Saints for the right to hire Sean Payton as their head coach. Payton retired after the 2021 season but was still under contract with the Saints, forcing Denver to compensate New Orleans for letting him coach elsewhere.

Payton will be charged with righting the ship and salvaging the Broncos' expensive investment in Wilson, and his track record of success with Drew Brees in New Orleans is a strong indicator that if anyone can do it, he can. But considering what we saw from this team last year, that's far easier said than done.

Return of the Running Back?

If the NFL is "devaluing" the running back position, a couple of teams picking high in this year's draft must have missed the memo.

Despite what appears to be a recent trend of teams not wanting to invest premium resources in the position, two running backs came off the board in the top 12 picks this year. The Atlanta Falcons spent the No. 8 overall pick on Bijan Robinson out of Texas, while the Detroit Lions used the No. 12 overall selection on Alabama's Jahmyr Gibbs.

From 2015 to 2018, at least one running back was selected in the top 10 of each draft, including three in the top five. But there hadn't been one taken in the top 10 since. Over that four-year stretch, only four running backs had been selected in the first round at all, and none of them higher than 24th overall.

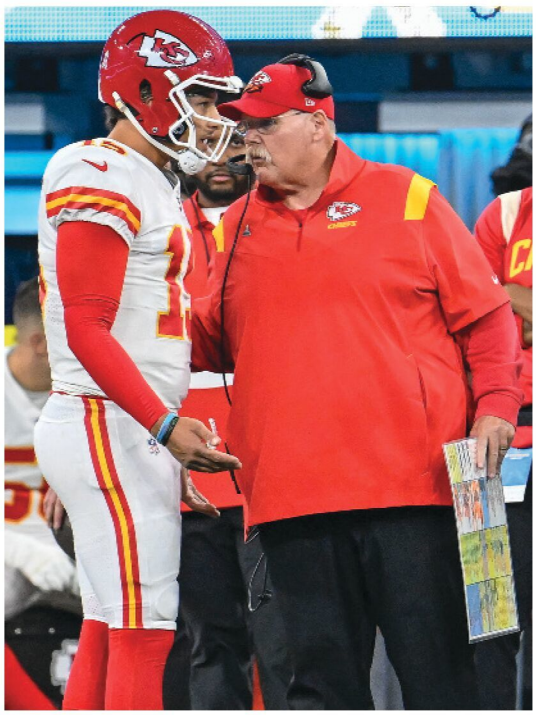
Enter Robinson and Gibbs, two backs who have the explosiveness, versatility, and big-play ability to be three-down nightmares for opposing defenses.

No team spends such a high pick on a running back without planning for him to be a huge part of its game plan and overall philosophy. Both Robinson and Gibbs should have every opportunity to prove worthy of their high draft positions, and if they do, it could entice other teams to move the pendulum even further back in the direction of valuing the most talented prospects at the position moving forward.

Can Mahomes and the Chiefs Repeat?

The Kansas City Chiefs are coming off their second Super Bowl win in four years, with Mahomes leading the way as MVP of both victories.

Do they have what it takes to run it back this time?



ANDY REID AND PATRICK MAHOMES

Mahomes and the Chiefs made it all the way back to The Big Game the year after they beat the San Francisco 49ers in Super Bowl LIV, but they ran into the buzzsaw of Tom Brady and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in a blowout loss in which they failed to score a single touchdown. If anyone knows how tough it is to hoist the Lombardi two years in a row, it's the Chiefs, who were able to get the job done again last season with an epic comeback win over the Philadelphia Eagles.

Some key pieces left this offseason, but several new additions have also arrived in their place. A new draft class has arrived to restock the cupboard, and some promising young players return from last year's team with an opportunity for bigger roles. We'll see if it's enough for them to once again fight their way successfully through an ever-strengthening AFC, but with Mahomes in the driver's seat, the Chiefs will have as good a chance as any team of making it back to the top.

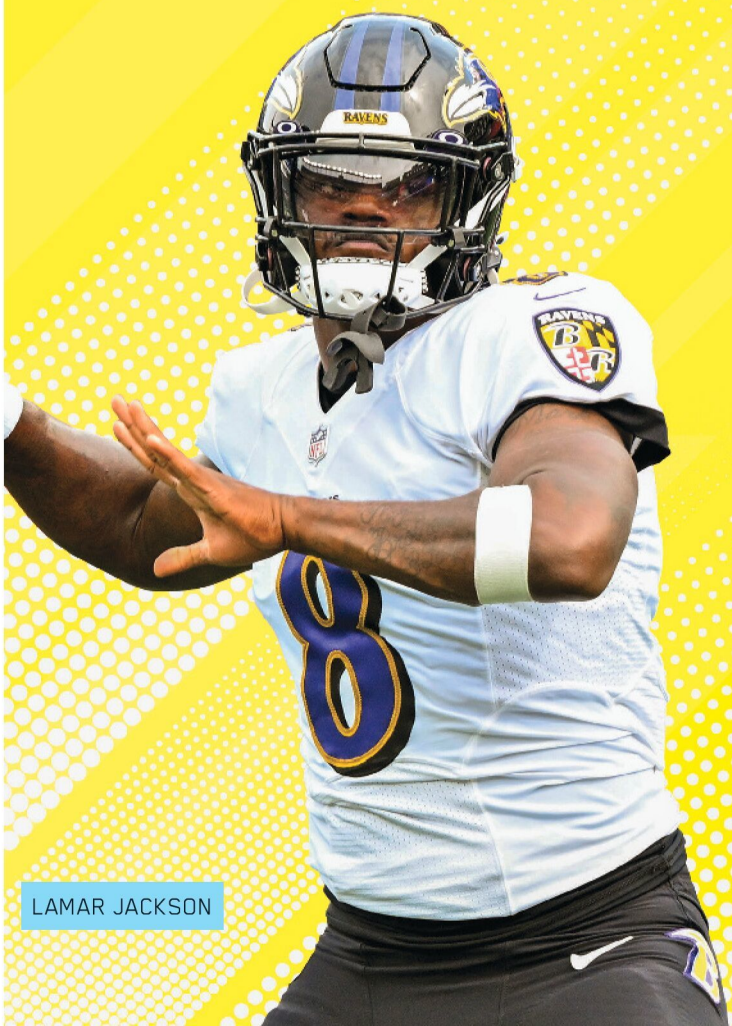
LAMAR JACKSON 2.0

After a long and dramatic contract standoff, Lamar Jackson is entrenched as the Baltimore Ravens' quarterback of the present and future, thanks to a record-breaking five-year deal that makes him the highest-paid player in NFL history (but probably not for long).

Now that the Ravens have cleared that hurdle, they must turn their attention to actually giving Jackson an opportunity to make the most of his rare skill set, which means expanding the passing game. Jackson played in a more pro-style offense under Bobby Petrino at Louisville than the Ravens have ever let him run, which finally might change with Todd Monken taking over for Greg Roman as offensive coordinator.

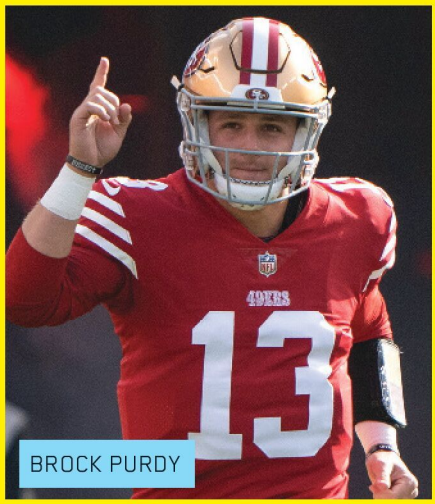
Throw in the additions of Odell Beckham Jr. and first-round pick Zay Flowers at wide receiver, and you have a recipe for the Ravens finally allowing him to fully unleash his dual-threat ability on opposing defenses with a more balanced scheme and play-calling strategy. That should keep opponents more honest when having to guard against the aerial attack instead of just loading up the box against their previously run-heavy approach, and it should help keep Jackson healthier by not forcing him into the "running QB" box any more often than is completely necessary.

Jackson has the arm talent to excel as a passer and the weapons around him to succeed through the air, and he might finally have the benefit of an offensive philosophy that's willing to take more risks and therefore reap the rewards of one of the most talented players in NFL history.



LAMAR JACKSON

CHIEFS: ROBERT HANASHIRO-USA TODAY SPORTS JACKSON: BRIAN FLUHARTY-USA TODAY SPORTS



BROCK PURDY

THE CURIOUS CASE OF THE 49ERS QB

Was there a more compelling position group last season than the 49ers' quarterback room?

Heading into the season, the torch had been passed from veteran Jimmy Garoppolo to highly touted No. 3 draft pick Trey Lance, as the 49ers opted for the latter's higher ceiling over the former's higher floor. Lance suffered a season-ending ankle injury in Week 2, which forced Garoppolo back into the starting job. His comeback was short-lived, though, as he would suffer a season-ending injury of his own near the halfway point of the regular season.

Enter Brock Purdy, last year's "Mr. Irrelevant" as the last pick in the NFL Draft, who helped extend a 12-game winning streak for San Francisco all the way to the NFC title game. Unfortunately, the injury bug didn't stop biting, as both Purdy and fourth-stringer Josh Johnson suffered injuries in a 31-7 loss to the Eagles, with Purdy finishing the game by simply handing the ball off because he was the only quarterback who could even do that much at that point.

Purdy's elbow injury — he underwent surgery in March to repair his UCL — threatens his availability for the upcoming season, while Garoppolo signed with the Las Vegas Raiders in the offseason. Lance will have an opportunity to reclaim the starting role, but the Niners also signed veterans Sam Darnold and Brandon Allen for what might have to be more than just depth.

The 49ers have one of the league's best rosters from top to bottom, but after a roller-coaster 2022 campaign, the quarterback situation is still anything but settled heading into 2023.

PURDY: STAN SZETO-USA TODAY SPORTS; CAMPBELL: VINCENT CARCHIETTA-USA TODAY SPORTS; BELICHICK: DAVID BUTLER II-USA TODAY SPORTS; SMITH: JOE NICHOLSON-USA TODAY SPORTS; MURRAY: MARK J. REBILAS-USA TODAY SPORTS

Best of the Rest

There are way more than 15 things worth watching this NFL season, so here are some other compelling storylines to follow in 2023:

Can Tua Tagovailoa stay healthy and return to his early-season form from 2022?

Which version of Kirk Cousins and the Minnesota Vikings will we get this season?

Are the Lions on the cusp of something special under Dan Campbell, or was last season's promise just a fluke?

Will Bill Belichick's genius and defense be enough to overcome Mac Jones and a stagnant offense?

Can Josh Allen finally get the Bills over the hump and back to the Super Bowl?

Will Garoppolo's reunion with Josh McDaniels spell success for the post-Derek Carr Raiders?

Can Dak Prescott make a Super Bowl run in Dallas?

How much progress will the Rams make on their full-fledged rebuild?

Will there be a true tank-fest for next year's No. 1 overall pick and the right to select USC quarterback Caleb Williams?

Will any of this season's first-year head coaches get their team to the postseason?

Can second-year quarterbacks like Kenny Pickett, Desmond Ridder and Sam Howell make a big leap in their development?

What will Geno Smith do as an encore for the Seahawks after last year's award-winning comeback year?

When will Kyler Murray return for the Cardinals, and will he still be able to live up to his massive contract extension?

NOW OR NEVER?

8 NFL teams with closing windows

BY GILBERTO MANZANO

Cowboys QB
DAK PRESCOTT

After clinching another AFC North crown last January, Bengals quarterback Joe Burrow made a bold statement: "The window is my whole career."

That memorable quote obviously generated headlines, partly because Super Bowl windows close quickly in the NFL, a grueling league with rapidly changing rosters, salary-cap issues and brief careers. But not many took issue with Burrow's confidence. Three years into his pro career, he already is an established elite quarterback and a proven winner who has taken the Bengals to a Super Bowl and back-to-back AFC Championship Games. At 26, Burrow's future remains bright.

Probably only Burrow and Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes can get away with saying that their window is always open. Mahomes' results speak for themselves. He's a two-time Super Bowl champion and two-time MVP, and the Chiefs have shown they can withstand roster turnover.

The Bengals and Chiefs are the only two contenders that needn't worry about their windows slamming down on their fingers, which is what happened to the Rams and Buccaneers. But the Rams and Bucs can at least say they won a Super Bowl before entering this new rebuilding phase, where they've joined the Cardinals, Falcons, Panthers, Bears, Texans and Colts as teams in the early stages of constructing a competitive roster.

The Titans also saw their Super Bowl window likely close; they missed the postseason for the first time since 2018, and their offseason moves indicate that they've resigned themselves to a soft rebuild. As for the Packers? After the trade of Aaron Rodgers, their window (or lack thereof) consists of the performance of one man: quarterback Jordan Love.

Rodgers' new team — the Jets — is trying to pry open a Super Bowl window and end the NFL's longest playoff drought by taking a big Brady-like swing. The Broncos, meanwhile, hired a Super Bowl-winning coach (Sean Payton) who will try to resurrect Russell Wilson's career. And Payton's former team, the Saints, traded for Derek Carr to try to get back in contention.

The Giants, Jaguars and Seahawks are coming off postseason berths, and the Lions appear on the verge of their first playoff appearance in seven seasons. Those four teams might not be serious Super Bowl contenders — yet — and could be a year away from joining the next tier. But they're getting closer.

The Browns, Commanders, Patriots, Steelers and Raiders are showing glimmers, but questions remain.

That leaves eight teams. This octet all made the playoffs last season and still have Super Bowl aspirations in 2023. Those windows, however, may not remain open for much longer.

NATHAN RAY SEEBECK/USA TODAY SPORTS

8. MINNESOTA VIKINGS

Coming off a 13-4 season, the Vikings are in limbo as a team trying to win now but with a wandering eye for a future that might not include quarterback Kirk Cousins. With so much uncertainty, the Vikings could be setting themselves up for a disappointing season, thus shutting their window with Cousins, who has no guaranteed money left on his contract past this season. The Vikings could be finished giving Cousins short-term extensions with only one postseason victory to show for it since he arrived in Minnesota in 2018.

But the Vikings have wide receiver Justin Jefferson, arguably the best offensive playmaker in the NFL, and that might be enough for them to return to the postseason. Jefferson likely will be around for multiple windows in Minnesota, but this might be the last year with Cousins, running back Dalvin Cook and safety Harrison Smith, three core players with minimal playoff success with the Vikings. Regardless of what happens this season, the Vikings appear set on revamping the roster with different core players around Jefferson.

7. DALLAS COWBOYS

The window might be closing fast on the Cowboys with quarterback Dak Prescott due for a new contract. If Prescott doesn't receive an extension this offseason, this could be his last season in Dallas; his play on the field will dictate whether they'll look to guarantee his salary for 2024 and beyond.

Prescott would have helped his contract push in January had he delivered a postseason victory against the 49ers in the divisional round, where so many Cowboys seasons have abruptly ended since the glory years of the '90s. Dallas hasn't advanced to an NFC Championship game since the 1995 season, and it has won only two playoff games since Prescott became the starter in 2016.

The Cowboys, who released running back Ezekiel Elliott in March, have reached a crossroads. They could be reluctant to start a full rebuild and instead give Prescott a short-term contract, similar to what the Vikings have done with Cousins.

But with a strong nucleus of players that features edge rusher Micah Parsons and wide receiver CeeDee Lamb, the Cowboys shouldn't be afraid to explore other options if Prescott fails to deliver this season.

6. BALTIMORE RAVENS

The Ravens signed quarterback Lamar Jackson to a record-setting five-year contract extension, and with the organization's track record of maintaining a competitive roster, Baltimore could have an open Super Bowl window for years to come. But can Jackson be the one to lead them to another Lombardi Trophy with only one playoff win on his résumé?

It got contentious at times between Jackson and the Ravens during contract negotiations. The former MVP quarterback announced on social media that he had requested a trade in March, but the two sides might have mended fences after the team signed wide receiver Odell Beckham Jr. The Ravens also added another offensive weapon for Jackson, drafting speedy wideout Zay Flowers in the first round. With Jackson receiving offensive help and signing a new contract, he now appears set on building a future with the Ravens and propping open the Super Bowl window.

Ravens QB

LAMAR JACKSON

COREY PERRINE/FLORIDA TIMES-UNION

Bills QB
JOSH ALLEN

5. MIAMI DOLPHINS

The Dolphins have taken the Rams' blueprint of quickly building a Super Bowl window by trading for star players. In the past year, the Dolphins have acquired wide receiver Tyreek Hill, edge rusher Bradley Chubb and cornerback Jalen Ramsey.

The aggressive approach paid off for the Rams with a Super Bowl win, but it also provided proof that going all-in is only temporary, and the aftermath likely means a few losing seasons to repair the salary cap. The Dolphins, however, have flexibility because quarterback Tua Tagovailoa is still on his rookie deal.

But it's unknown whether Tagovailoa is more like Jared Goff or Matthew Stafford in this Rams-like blueprint for the Dolphins. Tagovailoa's play on the field (and his health) will determine whether the Dolphins capitalize on this Super Bowl window. If the 2020 first-round pick struggles, the Dolphins likely will need to execute one more blockbuster trade, one that involves a star quarterback.

4. LOS ANGELES CHARGERS

The Chargers created a Super Bowl window last year by trading for Khalil Mack and splurging in free agency, but all they had to show for it was a blown 27-0 lead against the Jaguars in the wild-card round. The window is closing fast with star players in the back end of their primes and Herbert's looming massive contract extension — L.A. picked up his fifth-year option at $29.5 million for 2024 at a minimum — that effectively will shrink the Chargers' salary cap for years to come.

Last season didn't go as planned, but the Chargers proved they could compete without Herbert having to carry the heavy workload. Head coach Brandon Staley's defense finally showed signs of improvement last season and could be a top unit this year with safety Derwin James Jr., edge rusher Joey Bosa, Mack and linebacker Eric Kendricks leading the charge.

The Chargers likely will have other windows throughout the Herbert era, but unfortunately for them, they play in the same division as Mahomes and the Chiefs.

3. BUFFALO BILLS

Stefon Diggs' frustrations during the lopsided 27-10 divisional playoff loss to the Bengals signified how time is against the Bills in their bid to capitalize on the Super Bowl window that Diggs and star quarterback Josh Allen have helped create. Allen's vast improvements, Diggs' arrival and a trip to the AFC Championship Game in 2020 signaled the start of the Bills' memorable run, but they have stalled with back-to-back exits in the divisional round, and this might be the last year with this core group.

The Bills said goodbye to a few key players, such as linebacker Tremaine Edmunds, because of a tight salary cap, but they managed to retain safety Jordan Poyer for one more crack at the Super Bowl. The Bills infamously lost four consecutive Super Bowls in the early 1990s, and this group might also be remembered for the wrong reasons if they don't at least advance to one.

Allen has plenty to prove after Burrow outplayed him in the postseason. With the offensive additions of running back Damien Harris and tight end Dalton Kincaid, and a healthy Von Miller on defense, the Bills will once again have one of the best rosters in the NFL.

MARK KONEZNY/USA TODAY SPORTS

2. PHILADELPHIA EAGLES

Unlike the Bills, the Eagles probably don't feel a sense of urgency because GM Howie Roseman has a knack for quickly retooling rosters, and they won Super Bowl LII six years ago. But many veterans, such as center Jason Kelce, defensive end Brandon Graham and defensive tackle Fletcher Cox, likely decided to return to Philadelphia for another year because they wanted to win a Super Bowl with Jalen Hurts, the star quarterback who leapt into superstardom last season.

This likely will be Hurts' last year with those veterans, and it might be hard for Roseman to maintain a winning roster with Hurts signing a massive extension to stay in Philadelphia. Roseman, however, got off to a productive start by drafting defensive tackle Jalen Carter and edge rusher Nolan Smith in the first round this year. Hitting on draft picks is a big reason why Mahomes and the Chiefs remain competitive, despite a tight salary cap.

The Eagles are in a good place to compete for the foreseeable future with wide receivers DeVonta Smith and A.J. Brown and cornerbacks James Bradberry and Darius Slay. But nothing is ever guaranteed in the NFL. The Eagles waited several decades to win the franchise's first Super Bowl.

1. SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

The 49ers have kept buying themselves time to win a Super Bowl by drafting quarterbacks Trey Lance and Brock Purdy, but after falling short the past few seasons and extending a title drought that has reached nearly three decades, patience might be running low in San Francisco. The 49ers are in win-now mode after trading away first-round picks in 2022 and 2023 to move up in the draft and select Lance two years ago, and they relinquished this year's second-round pick to Carolina to land running back Christian McCaffrey in October. The 49ers also splurged in free agency by adding interior defensive lineman Javon Hargrave, a former Eagles standout.

Niners general manager John Lynch has been aggressive, and the results have been three NFC championship game appearances and a trip to the Super Bowl in the past four seasons, although that's not the end game. Lance is only in his third season, but it's now or never after he lost his starting job to Purdy; he will likely receive another opportunity to prove himself with Purdy recently undergoing surgery on his throwing arm.

Also, the 49ers ignored the analytics community by paying a high price for a running back, and the only way to prove the analysts wrong is by winning a Super Bowl with McCaffrey. There's uncertainty surrounding the quarterback position, but the 49ers have shown that they can win with subpar quarterback play because of a stacked roster that features tight end George Kittle, edge rusher Nick Bosa, linebacker Fred Warner and wide receiver Deebo Samuel.

But elite quarterback play might be the final ingredient for the 49ers to win their first Super Bowl since the mid-'90s.

Eagles QB
JALEN HURTS

MICHAEL CHOW/THE REPUBLIC

HIGH HOPES

Here are the Super Bowl odds for the octet of teams whose windows might slam shut after this season:

Team	Odds
Baltimore Ravens	+2000
Buffalo Bills	+800
Dallas Cowboys	+1400
L.A. Chargers	+2000
Miami Dolphins	+2500
Minnesota Vikings	+4000
Philadelphia Eagles	+800
San Francisco 49ers	+700

Source: SI Sportsbook

LONGING FOR LOMBARDI

Who is ready to break through?

BY MATT VERDERAME

Of the 32 NFL teams, a dozen are still without a Super Bowl title. Sure, some have championships predating the era of Super Sundays. The Cardinals won NFL titles in 1925 and '47. The Lions and Browns were ascendant in the '50s, winning six rings between them that decade alone. In the American Football League, the Bills, Chargers and Oilers (now Titans) combined for five titles in the early '60s.

Yet for our purposes here, those six are lumped with the Vikings, Jaguars, Texans, Panthers, Falcons and Bengals in their thus-far-futile quests for a Lombardi Trophy.

Coming into this season, which are the best bets to finally break through, and what is the path forward for each?

Here's a team-by-team rundown of what each franchise is facing in its ongoing quest for Super Bowl glory, and what it will take for this to be the year.

ATLANTA: A RIDDER MIRACLE

Could head coach Arthur Smith break through in his third season at the helm? Smith is widely regarded as one of the best offensive minds in the league, and now he has a defense bolstered by multiple additions up front, including David Onyemata and Calais Campbell. The offense is loaded with skill-position talent, including 2023 first-round pick tailback Bijan Robinson.

In a weak NFC South, the Falcons could take flight. Of course, the biggest question is at quarterback, with veteran Taylor Heinicke and second-year man Desmond Ridder being the options. For Atlanta to make a playoff run, Ridder must live up to every ounce of his considerable potential.

ARIZONA: AN ACT OF GOD

Let's be honest with ourselves and admit that this is a rebuilding year for the Cardinals — and likely the first of a few. The best-case scenario is that Arizona bottoms out with first-year head coach Jonathan Gannon, finishes with the top pick in the 2024 Draft and lands either USC's Caleb Williams or North Carolina's Drake Maye. The Cardinals also own the Texans' first-round pick in 2024.

If that happens, the Cardinals can move off Kyler Murray, who just signed a $230.5 million extension less than a year ago, and reset an organization that has struggled to find consistency since its inception more than 100 years ago.

BUFFALO: GETTING OVER THE PROVERBIAL HUMP

The Bills have been very close to reaching their first Super Bowl since 1993 over the past three seasons, losing twice to the Chiefs at Arrowhead Stadium before being rudely bounced by the Bengals in the Divisional Round last January.

The big questions are the health of edge rusher Von Miller and whether the coaching staff can help QB Josh Allen **(left)** navigate critical points in games. Last year, the Bills made far too many mistakes in the red zone. If Buffalo can eliminate those errors, its talent stacks up with anybody's.

CAROLINA: A NEW DAY IN CHARLOTTE

The Panthers had one of the league's best offseasons, adding head coach Frank Reich, defensive coordinator Ejiro Evero, receiver Adam Thielen, running back Miles Sanders and the draft's first overall pick in quarterback Bryce Young.

The NFC South is wide open. While no rookie signal-caller has ever reached the Super Bowl, perhaps Young can take advantage of a bad division and weaker conference.

CINCINNATI: AN OPEN DOOR

The Bengals have reached the past two AFC title games and split those games with the Chiefs. Bringing back most of its core from last year, Cincinnati remains loaded offensively, led by the trio of quarterback Joe Burrow and receivers Tee Higgins and Ja'Marr Chase. Plus, few teams are better coached. Defensive coordinator Lou Anarumo is arguably the best at his craft, mixing coverages and disguising blitz packages to harass even the best opponents.

CLEVELAND: DESHAUN WATSON'S RETURN TO FORM

After sitting out the '21 season amid legal issues — more than two dozen sexual assault allegations and civil lawsuits — and a trade request, Watson struggled in his six-game return from suspension with the Browns last season. If Cleveland is going to challenge in the tough AFC North, it begins with Watson reestablishing himself as a top-flight quarterback.

DETROIT: FILLING A VOID UP NORTH

Aaron Rodgers is gone from Green Bay. And for the first time in decades, the Lions have realistic designs on winning their division and hosting a playoff game. The last time those things happened? 1993. Detroit is teeming with offensive talent, led by QB Jared Goff and receiver Amon-Ra St. Brown. The Lions loaded up defensively this offseason with corners Cameron Sutton and Emmanuel Moseley, along with star safety C.J. Gardner-Johnson. Detroit should also be a force up front, paced by second-year defensive end Aidan Hutchinson.

TINA MACINTYRE-YEE/ USA TODAY SPORTS

HOUSTON: DIVINE INTERVENTION

The Texans have far more questions than answers as they enter the season under their fourth head coach in as many years (it's now DeMeco Ryans' turn). The offseason was largely about the draft. In short, the reset continues.

That said, the Texans have young talent in rookie QB C.J. Stroud, edge rusher Will Anderson Jr., running back Dameon Pierce, safety Jalen Pitre and corner Derek Stingley Jr.

JACKSONVILLE: LAWRENCE ASCENDS

Lawrence enjoyed a breakthrough last season, his first under head coach Doug Pederson, throwing for 4,113 yards and 25 TDs while leading Jacksonville to the AFC South title and a thrilling Wild Card victory over the Chargers, a game the Jags rallied to win after trailing 27-0.

Now, the attention turns to whether they can run with the Chiefs, Bengals and Bills in the AFC. The X-factors: It's a contract year for edge rusher Josh Allen, and receiver Calvin Ridley returns from a one-year suspension.

L.A. CHARGERS: FINALLY WINNING THE BIG ONE

Can Brandon Staley and Justin Herbert finally win a big game together? Despite myriad talent across Los Angeles' roster, the Chargers have consistently crumbled in big moments.

For Los Angeles, winning the AFC West starts with handling the Chiefs. In Herbert's career, he's 2-4 against Kansas City. Additionally, the Chargers need to stay healthy, something that has eluded them for years. If they find answers in those two areas, they could contend for a Super Bowl.

MINNESOTA: A DEFENSIVE TURNAROUND

Last year, the Vikings ranked tied for 29th in yards allowed per play (5.9). With new defensive coordinator Brian Flores, how significant will the defensive improvement be?

If the Vikings can field an average defense, the offense should be formidable behind All-Pro receiver Justin Jefferson. Entering the final year of his deal, quarterback Kirk Cousins has the weapons. The big question there is whether Cousins can perform in the big moments.

TENNESSEE: YOUTH IS SERVED

A youth movement is afoot in Nashville. This season is about playing stingy defense to keep games close, while allowing running back Derrick Henry — who is 29 and has 1,750 career NFL carries — to win late with his legs. Still, this is a limited team hoping to see its youth improve, specifically receiver Treylon Burks and corners Kristian Fulton, Caleb Farley and Roger McCreary.

EAGLES

BILL STREICHER-USA TODAY SPORTS

HOW TO BET ON PRO FOOTBALL

YOUR GUIDE TO AN EXCITING SEASON OF NFL WAGERING

BY JENNIFER PIACENTI

With the rise of sports betting, more and more people will want to get in on the action. But where and how do you start?

If you're feeling overwhelmed by looking at a sportsbook's odds or by the jargon used in Las Vegas, this article is for you. In the pages that follow, we will look at terms like moneyline (ML), against the spread (ATS), straight up (SU), over/under (O/U), vig and what all those plus and minus signs really mean (spoiler alert: it's actually incredibly simple).

By the end of this primer, you'll be able to tell people whether you think "the juice is worth the squeeze."

First things first: Here are offerings for the NFC Championship game featuring the San Francisco 49ers vs. the Philadelphia Eagles. This is similar to what you will see when you visit any online sportsbook.

MONEYLINE: 49ERS (+120) | EAGLES (-143)
SPREAD: 49ERS +2.5 (-110) | EAGLES -2.5 (-110)
TOTAL: 46.5 OVER (-110) | UNDER (-110)

continued on page 24

from page 23

$ BETTING THE MONEYLINE

Let's say you are a huge 49ers fan, and you want to place a bet on San Francisco to win this game. It doesn't matter if San Francisco wins by one point or wins by 14 points; you simply want to bet that the 49ers will win. If so, you'll want to take the 49ers to win straight up (SU). This kind of bet is called a moneyline (ML) bet. Easy, right?

Looking at the menu on the previous page, you will see the offering for ML bets on the top. They are simply listed with a + or - sign. The 49ers are +120 on the ML, while the Eagles are -143.

But hold up: What does that mean?

The plus and minus signs are shorthand to tell you what your payout will be if you win your bet.

If you see a minus sign next to your bet, your payout will be less than 100 percent of your initial investment if you win the bet. If you see a plus sign, your payout will be more than 100 percent of your initial investment.

The minus sign on an ML bet also indicates the team is favored. It makes sense, right? The sportsbook will not pay big dividends for betting on the favorite.

Conversely, the plus sign on an ML bet indicates the underdog. Sportsbooks are willing to pay out more for the less-likely outcome. In our example, the San Francisco 49ers are the underdog, and the payout will be more than what you initially invested should the 49ers win the game.

So, we are taking the 49ers on the ML at +120. According to the oddsmakers, this is a bet that you are less likely to win, so if the 49ers win, the sportsbook will pay you 1.20 times, or 120 percent of, your initial investment. If you put $100 on the 49ers to win, and they do, your profit will be $120, bringing your total payout to $220. So, $100 in and $220 out if the Niners win the game.

Now, let's say your college roommate is a Philadelphia Eagles fan. He is all-in on Jalen Hurts and the Eagles as the favorites and decides to invest his $100 for a -143 payout. Should Philadelphia win this game, his profit would be only $69.93, and the payout would be $169.93.

Once again, with 49ers +120 and Eagles -143:

As a 49ers fan, you can bet $100 for a potential $120 profit and $220 return.

The Eagles backer must bet $143 for a $100 profit and potential $243 return.

Also, bear this in mind: The Philadelphia fan will lose $143 if their team, the favorite, gets upset. You will only lose $100 if the 49ers, the underdogs, do not win the game. This is why it's often not worth the risk for the limited potential payout if a team is heavily favored.

In summary: Betting the team SU (straight up) is a type of ML (moneyline) bet. Your payout is indicated by the "price" represented by a plus or minus sign in the moneyline row of the above wagering menu.

+/- BETTING AGAINST THE SPREAD

Returning to our example, let's look at the middle option on the betting menu.

On the middle line, you see two + and - numbers. The number right next to the team name is what is called "the spread." The numbers next to that in parentheses is the rate being offered.

MONEYLINE: 49ERS (+120) | EAGLES (-143)
SPREAD: 49ERS +2.5 (-110) | EAGLES -2.5 (-110)
TOTAL: 46.5 OVER (-110) | UNDER (-110)

According to this menu, I can also take the 49ers against the spread (ATS) at +2.5 for the rate of -110.

So, what exactly what does "the spread" mean? Quite simply, the spread is a handicap that puts the two teams on an even playing field. In this case, you can add 2.5 points to the 49ers' final score to determine who wins.

For example: If the final score of the game is Eagles 30, 49ers 28, as far as the sportsbook is concerned, San Francisco actually scored 30.5 (28+2.5) to Philadelphia's 30, and San Francisco wins this game ATS.

Got it? Easy, right?

So, in that final score example, if you had bet $110 on the 49ers ATS, you would have made a $100 profit for a $210 total payout.

However, if you had bet the 49ers on the ML, you could not add the 2.5 handicap, and you would have lost your entire $100 investment.

Now you can see why ML bets are offered at far different rates than ATS spread bets (and O/U bets — see below). If an underdog wins on the ML, the payout is more significant because the outcome was considered less likely. When you bet ATS, there is no real underdog, as the teams are both handicapped to be even." The house profits by pocketing "the vig" and hopes to take an even amount of money on both sides of this bet.

So what does "the vig" mean? That's the term for the 10 percent "fee" that the sportsbooks charge. It's also sometimes called "the juice." Essentially, this is the commission the sportsbook charges to ensure their business makes some money. If bettors on either side of a bet each have to wager $110, then the sportsbook takes in $220 per pair but only has to pay out the winning side at $210. This ensures them a $10 profit per pair of opposing bets.

BETTING THE OVER/UNDER

Using our same example, you can see in the wagering menu that the expected points total for the game is 46.5. The bet offered here is simple. Do you think the total points scored in this game will be more or less than 46.5?

MONEYLINE:
49ERS (+120) | EAGLES (-143)

SPREAD:
49ERS +2.5 (-110) | EAGLES -2.5 (-110)

TOTAL:
46.5 OVER (-110) | UNDER (-110)

But, wait! You can't have a half-point for a game total!

That's true, but this is the way that sportsbooks can ensure that at least one side wins. Imagine if they had set the points total and 56, and the game finished at exactly 56. No one would win, including the sportsbooks. That's called a push.

Next to the points total, you see another one of those triple-digit minus signs. As with the spread, both sides of the bet are offered at -110. This means that Vegas thinks this game could go either way: over or under 46.5. It's a coin flip, and you have 50/50 odds to win this bet.

Hold on, you're telling me that to win $100, I have to bet $110, no matter which side I choose? Yep, that's right, thanks to the vig.

So, being a 49ers fan, you think the Niners will control the ball on the ground, and you believe the top-ranked defense will also be able to limit the Eagles. You expect them to win this one, but without a lot of points being scored. You decide to take the under on the points total for this game and lay $110 for a potential $100 profit and a total payout of $210. Your college roommate feels much more optimistic about a high-scoring game. He is all in on Jalen Hurts and A.J. Brown having huge games and thinks the 49ers will have to throw the ball to try to catch up. He takes the over on the points total for the same odds. One of you will lose $110, one of you will win $100 and the sportsbook will pocket $10.

In summary: An over/under bet is simply a bet on whether you think the points in a game will be more or less than the listed total. These bets are generally, but not always, offered with a 10 percent vig and are a 50/50 proposition. Knowing how much "commission" you are paying is key to managing your bankroll.

There is a thrill in being part of the action, whether you bet the ML, ATS or O/U. I hope this primer helped make the process a little more accessible. There's a little skill and a lot of luck involved. Most importantly, remember that wagering should always be fun!

TEAM FOR A DAY

HOW TO PLAY DFS

DFS — or daily fantasy sports — is a great way to play fantasy football for cash or even for the thrill of having a new team just for the day.

This popular way to play offers rewards of up to one million dollars for a winning lineup, and its popularity doesn't seem to be waning.

So, what exactly is DFS, and how can you get in on the action? Let's break it down.

THE BASICS AND WHERE TO PLAY

There are a few popular sites for DFS, including FanDuel, DraftKings and even Yahoo! Each site has a different salary cap, but the idea is the same: Imagine you are the owner of a football team, and you have a budget from which you must assemble the best team possible — just for the day.

Players will be presented with their salaries, and you will fill out a roster that requires one QB, two RBs, three WRs, a TE, a D/ST and either a kicker or a flex, depending on the site.

Scoring will vary from site to site, but it's easiest to think of FanDuel as half-point PPR and DraftKings as full-point PPR. Always check the specific site for scoring details, as they do vary.

The goal is to score more points than your opponents. Simple enough, right?

CONTEST SELECTION/SLATES

So, now that you know how it works, let's talk about contest selection. There are two types of contests you can play: tournaments or cash.

GPP (grand prize pool) tournaments are the flashy ways to play that usually pull people into the site. You'll hear talk of the "milly-maker" where a winning lineup can take home a million dollars in any given week and often requires a mere $20 entry. Sounds pretty tempting for those of us who are good at fantasy football, doesn't it? But it's important to be aware that these contests have upwards of 200,000 entries. With that many entries, there will be a lot of duplicate lineups. Thirty percent of the prize pool goes to first place, which could be further divided if multiple lineups tie for the most points that day, and the rest is divided accordingly so that those who finish in the top 20 percent of the contest will get paid out. One lucky winner (or maybe a few lucky winners) will have a very big payday.

Cash games include head-to-head matchups, 50/50 pools and double-ups.

In head-to-head matchups, you are simply trying to have a higher score than a single opponent. If you win, you will take all the winnings (minus a small percentage referred to as the "rake" for the DFS site), and the opponent loses his investment.

In 50/50 pools, those who score in the top half of the pool all get paid out, but unlike a GPP, each player in the top 50 percent

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gets paid the exact same amount. Again, there is a small "rake" for the DFS site, so in this case, your payout will be slightly less than twice the entry fee.

In double-ups or triple-ups, a smaller percentage of the player pool gets paid out, but those who finish in the percentage of the pool will either double or triple their investment, depending on the type of contest.

So, what's the difference?

As you can probably tell, in a GPP, you will be looking for max upside for all players. You will also be looking to have a unique lineup if at all possible to avoid splitting too much of your potential winnings. If it hits, you get paid — and big time.

In cash games, you either need only to beat one person, or you just need to finish toward the upper half of the pool. You don't need to aim for the top score overall. That leaves relatively good odds for you to make a small amount of money.

You've probably guessed by now that this could lead to different strategies when building a lineup.

PLAYER SELECTION: CONSIDER STACKING AND TELLING A STORY

If you opt to go for the gold and play in a GPP tournament, you will need to take on more risk when you are building your lineup, and you will need a lot of upside. You don't want to worry too much about the downside — just take a big swing. Most players do not enter a single lineup in a GPP; rather, they will enter multiple lineups — all with minor differences — hoping one will be the big winner.

One strategy often employed in GPP, though not exclusive to tournament play, is game stacking. Stacking players from a team that is expected to play well is often profitable. You can take hints from Vegas, too.

What do I mean?

Let's say the Chiefs are favored at home over the Bills by a mere -1.5, and the game total is expected to be 52.5. As soon as I see that line, I am thinking about a stack. Why?

I see that Vegas expects this game to be very high-scoring. That can only be good for my DFS team. I also see that the spread is only 1.5 points. That says to me that the lead could change in this game multiple times. Immediately, I am interested in both Josh Allen and Patrick Mahomes. Now, I start to build a story.

I know that Patrick Mahomes loves Travis Kelce — who plays at a thin TE position — and I am going to have to pay up for that pair. For my flex spot, I want to consider another Chiefs receiver in this game since I think the ball will be in the air. I'll need to save some salary, so maybe I can pivot to Marquez Valdes-Scantling or Kadarius Toney and hope Mahomes finds them in the end zone. On the other side of this, it seems like Stefon Diggs will need to be involved if the Bills are going to keep up, so I am also going to spend up for a Bills WR. I'm choosing to spend down at the RB position based on how I think the game script will play out. One tip: Don't stack only one side of the game. If you believe the game will be high-scoring, you'll want players from both sides. Think of it as sending points back the other way — and you get to keep them all.

In my story, I could have also chosen to start Allen, Diggs and Gabriel Davis and send points back with Isiah Pacheco and Kelce instead. Both lineups have a chance to win, and I am likely to enter a few different options in the tournament based on how I think this game will play out.

You won't be able to fill out your lineup entirely with players from the same game, so you'll also want to add some high-upside players from another game to make your lineup more unique. Maybe it's even a random kicker. The relative value of a big individual performance isn't nearly as meaningful if the player is in a high percentage of your opponents' lineups (also referred to as "the chalk"), so don't be afraid to go contrarian with a player who has a low roster percentage.

Now, let's say you want to play a cash game. Stacking can still apply and still work well, but in a cash game, you are looking for more of a solid floor. If you stack a game and it goes sideways, you may wish you had just picked bell-cow running backs and wideouts that always get targets from across many NFL games, dividing your risk. In this case, you won't be too worried about how much a player is rostered. Again, a player who is heavily rostered is often referred to as "chalk." Chalk is often a good thing for your cash lineups because it represents a solid floor.

BANKROLL

The money you choose to invest this season in DFS is referred to as your bankroll. The most important thing to remember is that building your bankroll requires discipline. I'd recommend betting no more than 10 percent of your bankroll on any given contest as you slowly start to build your winnings. Playing mostly cash games, in which you have close to a 50 percent chance of winning, is the way to go for about 80 percent of your contests, while the other 20 percent could be invested in GPPs. Most importantly, don't ever bet your entire bankroll on one contest.

Cold streaks can happen, but remember: Slow and steady wins the race.

OTHER STRATEGIES AND TIPS

Remember, building a DFS lineup is a lineup for one day only. Matchups matter! Just because a player has a star name doesn't mean he will be the best for DFS that day. Use Vegas as your guide for hints as to which games may produce the most points.

Last year, Geno Smith was the fifth-highest-scoring QB for DFS. If you used him in Week 4 vs. the Lions last year, you got a huge bargain on his salary, and you could have spent up for the chalk play of Austin Ekeler vs. the Texans. Always look for favorable defensive matchups.

A couple more tips: Always look for players returning from injury whose salary may still be low, and check recent trends for who has been receiving more snaps and targets. These players could represent great value to help stay within your salary cap.

PLAYING THE ODDS

You Should Be Using Player Props as a Tool for Your Fantasy Drafts

Don't forget to check in with the sportsbooks before heading into your fantasy draft.

That's right; the oddsmakers can often help give a hint about which players will be values in your upcoming draft, as well as which players may be good first-round picks. All you have to do is check the futures.

A futures bet is exactly what it sounds like: a bet on a future outcome. Each preseason, sportsbooks offer an extensive menu of futures bets. These markets often are highly accurate; after all, a sportsbook is a business and needs to make money. So, if you aren't sure about a player's value, it's a good idea to see what the sportsbook is betting on — or hopes you are betting on — for the upcoming season.

Let's take, for example, what the sportsbooks offered last season for the Miami Dolphins receivers.

TYREEK HILL	JAYLEN WADDLE
1,025.5 receiving yards	925.5 receiving yards
8.5 receiving TDs	5.5 receiving TDs
80.5 receptions	85.5 receptions

When this was posted, I remember thinking: Can Tua Tagavailoa support two top-10 receivers? We knew the chemistry he had with Jaylen Waddle from the previous season, but would that disappear now that Tyreek Hill was in town? And as to Hill: Could he be successful without Patrick Mahomes?

As it turns out, both receivers were highly successful and actually exceeded most of these player props. The critical takeaway is that sportsbooks thought they could both be 1,000-yard receivers, but that Hill would be the alpha. They would both be valuable in drafts. I was doubtful they could put up big numbers, but the oddsmakers were right — the yards didn't favor one receiver significantly. Both players paid off handsomely for their draft-day value, and there was no need to worry about Waddle being completely overshadowed.

Let's go position-by-position and look at ways to help determine fantasy value based on markets at the sportsbook.

QUARTERBACKS

When looking at draft options, check each player's passing yards, touchdowns, and rushing yards futures markets.

Did you wonder if Josh Allen would continue to run? Sportsbooks offered rushing props for Allen of 500.5 rushing yards and 6.5 rushing TDs. He finished the season with 762 rushing yards and seven rushing TDs and was the fantasy QB2 for the season. These markets are especially important if you play in a league that awards six points for rushing TDs and only four for passing TDs.

Patrick Mahomes was the QB1 for the season, and he finished with an incredible 5,250 yards and 41 passing TDs. Oddsmakers seemed to agree that losing Tyreek Hill wouldn't affect his stats, as they set his passing yards prop all the way up at 4,650.5 yards and his TD prop at 34.5.

MVP futures (right) are also a good clue. Mahomes leads the field to take home MVP again in 2023.

PATRICK MAHOMES	+650
JOE BURROW	+700
JOSH ALLEN	+700
JUSTIN HERBERT	+1000
JALEN HURTS	+1100
TREVOR LAWRENCE	+1600
TUA TAGAVAILOA	+1600
LAMAR JACKSON	+1700
DAK PRESCOTT	+1800
JUSTIN FIELDS	+2000

RUNNING BACKS

Both TD props and rushing yards props are essential to look at when considering a running back. Not only do you want a lot of yards on the ground, but you also want a lot of goal-line carries.

Elliott finished with 876 yards and 12 TDs. I could tell from this prop that oddsmakers expected the load to be divided more with Tony Pollard last season, but that Zeke would remain the goal-line back. That turned out to be accurate, and he remained a decent value in standard leagues.

Here are Ezekiel Elliott's futures props from last year:
Rushing yards 875.5 | Rushing TDs 8.5

Consider also checking in on futures markets for who will lead the league in rushing yards, as well as where players are valued in the Offensive Player of the Year markets.

WIDE RECEIVERS/TIGHT ENDS

Consider props for receptions, receiving yards, and TDs. In PPR leagues, last year's WR1, Justin Jefferson, finished with the most catches (128) and the most receiving yards (1,809). By contrast, Chris Godwin finished the season with only 1,023 yards (20th). However, Godwin had 104 catches, making him the fantasy WR6 in PPR leagues. With wideouts, you'll also want to check in on who has markets to lead the league in receiving yards and where players are valued for Offensive Player of the Year.

TAKEAWAYS

Oddsmakers certainly don't get it right all the time, and of course, injuries can ruin a player's results faster than any snap share or target share change, but sportsbooks are still an excellent guide for finding value. They've been doing this a long time, so why not lean on the experts for draft-day tips?

2013 DRAFT

ERIC FISHER has acquitted himself well in his 10 seasons, but his relative lack of accolades makes him an appropriate standard-bearer for a lackluster class.

Any comprehensive rundown of the 2013 first-round class would include liberal usage of the descriptors "well-traveled" and "disappointing." Bottom line: College football dropped a bit of a deuce on the NFL with this class of injury-prone underachievers; fully half of the first-rounders failed to see their fifth-year options picked up. There are exceptions, of course — DeAndre Hopkins is a Hall of Famer in waiting, Lane Johnson is a fringe Hall candidate and players like Cordarrelle Patterson have carved out nice careers for themselves. But when your highest-selected QB is EJ Manuel, your No. 2 overall pick is out of the league after five seasons and several of your high-profile selections have changed locations with the frequency of a Saturday night pub crawl, it's safe to call this class a disappointment.

1. KANSAS CITY

ERIC FISHER | T | CENTRAL MICHIGAN

Kansas City (2013-20), Indianapolis (2021), Miami (2022) The first MAC player ever to be selected No. 1 overall, Fisher proved to be a more than serviceable tackle during his eight seasons in Kansas City, although he never quite lived up to his top draft billing. After some rookie struggles at right tackle (seven sacks and 35 hurries allowed), Fisher flipped to the left side for the 2014 season and settled in nicely, earning Pro Bowl appearances in 2018 and 2020 and winning a Super Bowl ring after the 2019 season. He suffered a torn Achilles in the Chiefs' AFC Championship Game victory on Jan. 24, 2021, and was released following the season. After a one-year stint in Indianapolis, Fisher signed with the Dolphins in Dec. 2022 in anticipation of a playoff run. **Pro Bowls:** 2 (2018, 2020)

2. JACKSONVILLE

LUKE JOECKEL | T | TEXAS A&M

Jacksonville (2013-16), Seattle (2017) Unlike Fisher, Joeckel lands squarely in the "bust" category after a brief, disappointing, injury-marred career. He looked like a can't-miss prospect after an Outland Trophy-winning All-America junior season, with some scouts comparing him to Joe Thomas and calling him the best prospect in the draft. Joeckel played only five games in his rookie season due to injury, and he graded as one of the worst tackles in the NFL in his second season. The Jags cut bait and shifted him inside for 2016, ultimately releasing him after the season. One ineffective year in Seattle later, Joeckel was out of the league for good following 50 career starts. **Pro Bowls:** None

3. MIAMI

DION JORDAN | DE | OREGON

Miami (2013-16), Seattle (2017-18), Oakland (2019), San Francisco (2020) A repeat PED offender, Jordan was arguably a bigger bust than

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REVISITED

Joeckel. The fact that the Dolphins traded up to get him, even while he was recovering from a shoulder injury, makes this an especially egregious whiff for the franchise. Jordan started all of one game for Miami, sitting out 2015 with a PED suspension and not playing a down in 2016 before the team released him in 2017 after he failed a physical. Stints in Seattle, Oakland and San Francisco were similarly ill-fated, and Jordan was out of the league after 2020 with five career starts and 13.5 career sacks. **Pro Bowls:** None

4. PHILADELPHIA

LANE JOHNSON | T | OKLAHOMA

Philadelphia: (2013-22) Johnson is perhaps the unlikeliest star in recent NFL history. Originally a practice squad quarterback at Oklahoma, he switched to tight end, then defensive end, and then ultimately to tackle due to injuries on the Sooners' O-line. It was there that he found his football home. A Senior Bowl-week standout, Johnson enjoyed a meteoric rise up draft charts, becoming the third offensive tackle picked in the draft's top four and, ultimately, the best of the trio. A starter in all 137 regular-season and postseason NFL games in which he has played, Johnson is a four-time Pro Bowler (2017-19, 2022) and earned first-team All-Pro honors in 2017 and 2022. He's also a dominant pass protector; heading into this year's playoffs, he hadn't allowed a sack since Week 11 of 2020 against the Browns and hadn't allowed a QB hit since Week 4 of 2021 against the Raiders, according to Pro Football Focus. **Pro Bowls:** 4 (2017-19, 2022)

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5. DETROIT

EZEKIEL ANSAH | DE | BYU

Detroit (2013-18), Seattle (2019), San Francisco (2020) The man they call Ziggy is another rare feel-good story from this draft. He arrived at BYU from Ghana with no knowledge of American football and had to be instructed on how to put on his shoulder pads after being persuaded to walk on to the Cougars football team. Once those pads were in place, though, he never looked back, emerging as a draft sleeper and then cementing a spot in the first round with a solid Senior Bowl and some eye-popping measurables (4.63 40 at 271 pounds). Mounting injuries ultimately took their toll, but Ansah amassed 50.5 career sacks and 12 forced fumbles in 93 career games (74 starts), earning All-Rookie honors in 2013 and a Pro Bowl appearance in 2015. **Pro Bowls:** 1 (2015)

6. CLEVELAND

BARKEVIOUS MINGO | DE | LSU

Cleveland (2013-15), New England (2016), Indianapolis (2017), Seattle (2018), Houston (2019), Chicago (2020) The best thing that can be said about Mingo's disappointing NFL career is that he was durable, playing at least 15 games at linebacker in all eight of his NFL seasons, even if only 40 of his 126 career appearances were starts. He did win a Super Bowl in New England in his lone season with the Patriots, although he made only 11 tackles that season. Mingo's best season was his rookie year, when he posted 5.0 of his 12.5 career sacks. His arrest on a felony indecency charge ended his career, although the charges were later dropped. **Pro Bowls:** None

7. ARIZONA

JONATHAN COOPER | G | NORTH CAROLINA

Arizona (2013-15), New England (2016), Cleveland (2016), Dallas (2016-17), Washington (2018), Oakland (2019) Guards rarely go in the top 10 (or even in the first round, for that matter), and Cooper is Exhibit A for that line of thinking. Some of his struggles, however, can be attributed to a broken fibula suffered as a rookie during preseason, followed by a litany of other injuries. Cooper, the highest-selected guard since 1986, played in only 46 games during his seven-year career, with 31 starts. **Pro Bowls:** None

8. ST. LOUIS

TAVON AUSTIN | WR | WEST VIRGINIA

St. Louis/L.A. Rams (2013-17), Dallas (2018-19), Green Bay (2020), Jacksonville (2021) The diminutive speedster was a prolific receiver at West Virginia, but that production never translated to the next level. He tantalized at times — as a rookie, he had an explosive showing vs. the Colts with two catches for 138 yards and a 98-yard punt return touchdown, and he showed all-purpose versatility throughout his career as a returner and rusher on jet sweeps. Shockingly, though, he averaged only 9.2 yards per catch for his career, and he displayed diminishing returns as a special teams weapon as his career wound down. **Pro Bowls:** None

9. N.Y. JETS

DEE MILLINER | CB | ALABAMA

N.Y. Jets (2013-15) The first of three straight selections plucked from Nick Saban's assembly line, Milliner was of

that relatively rare species: a Saban bust as a pro. A unanimous All-American as a junior and a two-time national champion, Milliner was a late riser on draft boards and received pre-draft buzz as a top-two pick after a 4.37 40 at the NFL Scouting Combine — although his poor display of ball skills at the event should have been a red flag. A strong close to his rookie season (NFL Defensive Rookie of the Month for December) offered hope, but Milliner was out of football after three injury-plagued seasons and only three career interceptions. **Pro Bowls:** None

10. TENNESSEE **CHANCE WARMACK** | G | ALABAMA

Tennessee (2013-16), Philadelphia (2017-18) Two guards picked in the top 10 scream "weak draft," especially since both failed to pan out. After being hyped as the best guard prospect since Steve Hutchinson by ESPN's Todd McShay and the best player in the draft by NBC's Mike Mayock, Warmack was little more than serviceable during his six-year career, starting only 51 games. He did start the first 34 games of his NFL career with the Titans before suffering a hand injury. **Pro Bowls:** None

11. SAN DIEGO **D.J. FLUKER** | T | ALABAMA

San Diego (2013-16), N.Y. Giants (2017), Seattle (2018-19), Baltimore (2020) Saban saw his three decorated national championship-winning first-rounders struggle at the next level. Fluker earned All-Rookie honors after 15 starts, but he was never much of a factor after that, getting kicked inside for much of his career and failing to earn any other postseason honors. **Pro Bowls:** None

12. OAKLAND **D.J. HAYDEN** | CB | HOUSTON

Oakland (2013-16), Detroit (2017), Jacksonville (2018-20), Washington (2021) Given the life-threatening injury that Hayden suffered in college — a torn inferior vena cava due to a freak collision in drills — the fact that he carved out a respectable NFL career is admirable. He ended his NFL career with 41 starts, four interceptions and 4.5 sacks. **Pro Bowls:** None

13. N.Y. JETS **SHELDON RICHARDSON** | DT | MISSOURI

N.Y. Jets (2013-16), Seattle (2017), Minnesota (2018), Cleveland (2019-20), Minnesota (2021) Richardson stormed out of the gate, earning Defensive Rookie of the Year honors in 2013 and a Pro Bowl nod in 2014, before self-inflicted issues dulled his impact. Despite those issues, Richardson maintained a solid level of production, finishing his nine-year career with 500 tackles, 64 TFLs and 33.5 sacks. **Pro Bowls:** 1 (2014)

14. CAROLINA **STAR LOTULELEI** | DT | UTAH

Carolina (2013-17), Buffalo (2018-21) A first-team All-American, Lotulelei earned All-Rookie honors after a 42-tackle, three-sack debut season, and he followed that with a few more solid seasons with the Panthers, earning him a five-year, $50 million deal with the Bills. Lotulelei played sparingly in 2021 after a COVID opt-out in 2020, finishing his career with 194 tackles and 16.5 sacks. **Pro Bowls:** None

15. NEW ORLEANS **KENNY VACCARO** | S | TEXAS

New Orleans (2013-17), Tennessee (2018-20) Vaccaro enjoyed a decent eight-year career — All-Rookie honors, 11.5 career sacks, 10 career interceptions. His retirement coincided with the launch of his second career as a professional gamer with his esports organization Gamers First. **Pro Bowls:** None

16. BUFFALO **EJ MANUEL** | QB | FLORIDA STATE

Buffalo (2013-16), Oakland (2017) The only quarterback selected in the first round, Manuel showed brief flashes as a rookie, tossing a Bills rookie-record 11 TD passes in 10 starts (4-6 record), but was ultimately a wasted pick, starting only 18 games (6-12 record) during a lackluster five-year career. After his retirement, Manuel joined the ACC Network as an analyst. **Pro Bowls:** None

BEST DRAFT

Philadelphia Eagles

In the first draft following the departure of Andy Reid, GM Howie Roseman and rookie head coach Chip Kelly laid the foundation for multiple deep playoff runs, including an improbable win in Super Bowl LII — although Kelly ultimately wouldn't be a part of the long-term success. Lane Johnson (No. 4) has been arguably the best right tackle in the NFL. Tight end Zach Ertz (No. 35) was a three-time Pro Bowler from 2017-19, posting a tight-end-record 116 catches for 1,163 yards and eight TDs in 2018. D-tackle Bennie Logan (No. 67) was a serviceable starter, backup QB Matt Barkley (No. 98) a dependable pro, and safety Jordan Poyer (No. 218) excelled after leaving Philly.

WORST DRAFT

Tennessee Titans

Remember these Titans? Probably not. In the last draft of Titans-Oilers founder and owner Bud Adams' life, GM Ruston Webster and head coach Mike Munchak failed to deliver. Chance Warmack (No. 10) was a "War Daddy," winning three titles at Alabama, but the road-grading guard wasn't quite ready for battle in the NFL and was out of town after four years. Receiver Justin Hunter (No. 34) was a familiar face, but the former Tennessee Vol struggled with just 85 catches for 1,349 yards and 13 TDs in six seasons, only three of which were in Nashville. Cornerback Blidi Wreh-Wilson (No. 70), linebacker Zaviar Gooden (No. 97) and center Brian Schwenke (No. 107) were also gone after their rookie deals expired.

17. PITTSBURGH

JARVIS JONES | LB | GEORGIA

Pittsburgh (2013-16) Yet another can't-miss-turned-bust, Jones was a two-time All-American at Georgia and seemed tailor-made to be an effective edge rusher for the Steelers. Didn't turn out that way. In 50 games with the Steelers (35 starts), Jones managed 130 tackles and only 6.0 sacks. **Pro Bowls:** None

18. SAN FRANCISCO

ERIC REID | S | LSU

San Francisco (2013-17), Carolina (2018-19) Reid enjoyed a respectable career, although he may be best known for being one of the earliest anthem-kneelers, which led to a collusion grievance against the NFL when Reid concluded he was being blackballed for his social justice stance. His last NFL season (2019 in Carolina) saw him post a career-best 130 tackles, but he was released after the season. **Pro Bowls:** 1 (2013)

19. N.Y. GIANTS

JUSTIN PUGH | T | SYRACUSE

N.Y. Giants (2013-17), Arizona (2018-22) One of only six 2013 first-rounders who was still on an NFL roster in 2022, Pugh has enjoyed a decent career consisting of 119 starts, although only 38 of them have come at tackle. His 2022 season ended after five games due to a torn ACL. **Pro Bowls:** None

20. CHICAGO

KYLE LONG | G | OREGON

Chicago (2013-19), Kansas City (2021) The son of NFL Hall of Famer Howie, Long stormed out of the gate with Pro Bowls his first three seasons, but mounting injuries took a toll and ended his career prematurely. He attempted a comeback with the Chiefs in 2021 but did not play a snap and re-retired. His post-football second act has included studio analysis and NASCAR esports. **Pro Bowls:** 3 (2013-15)

21. CINCINNATI

TYLER EIFERT | TE | NOTRE DAME

Cincinnati (2013-19), Jacksonville (2020) The solid Notre Dame product peaked in his third season, earning a Pro Bowl spot with career highs in receptions (52), yards (615) and TDs (13). But he never approached those heights again, largely due to nagging injuries. **Pro Bowls:** 1 (2015)

22. ATLANTA

DESMOND TRUFANT

CB | WASHINGTON

Atlanta (2013-19), Detroit (2020), New Orleans (2021), Las Vegas (2021) One of three NFL cornerback brothers (along with Marcus and Isaiah), Trufant was a capable lockdown corner over nine seasons, racking up 14 interceptions, 89 pass deflections, seven fumble recoveries and 366 tackles. He was a 2013 All-Rookie team member, and he made the Pro Bowl in 2015. **Pro Bowls:** 1 (2015)

23. MINNESOTA

SHARRIF FLOYD | DT | FLORIDA

Minnesota (2013-17) Considered by some experts to be the best defensive tackle prospect in the draft, Floyd saw his career cut short by nerve damage in his knee. The Vikings picked up Floyd's fifth-year option in May 2016, but he played only the first game of 2016 due to his knee, and he spent 2017 on the reserve/non-football injury list. He finished his career with 24 starts and 9.5 sacks. **Pro Bowls:** None

24. INDIANAPOLIS

BJÖRN WERNER | DE | FLORIDA STATE

Indianapolis (2013-15) The German-born Werner emerged as a top prospect at Florida State due to his prodigious physical gifts and impressive production (18 TFLs, 13 sacks as a junior). But his NFL career lasted only three seasons and 16 starts. He announced his retirement while broadcasting a 2017 playoff game on German television. He has continued his career as a broadcaster in Germany and an ambassador for the game in his native land. **Pro Bowls:** None

25. MINNESOTA

XAVIER RHODES | CB | FLORIDA STATE

Minnesota (2013-19), Indianapolis (2020-21), Buffalo (2022) One of the more decorated and successful members of this class, Rhodes is a three-time Pro Bowler and earned first-team All-Pro honors in 2017. He set a Vikings record with a 100-yard interception return in 2016. Rhodes has 13 career interceptions and two defensive TDs to his credit. **Pro Bowls:** 3 (2016-17, 2019)

26. GREEN BAY

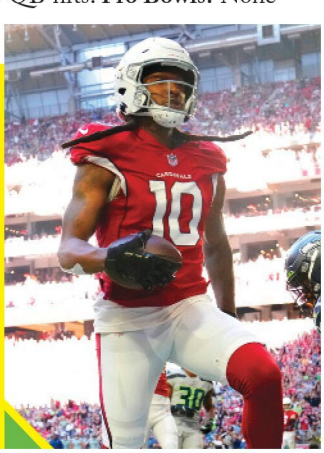
DATONE JONES | DE | UCLA

Green Bay (2013-16), Detroit (2017), San Francisco (2017), Dallas (2017-18), Las Vegas (2020) Jones showed some NFL staying power despite starting only nine games in his career and never being particularly effective. The Packers tried him as an edge-rushing OLB in 2016 before releasing him due to a lack of production. He finished his career with 10.0 sacks and 36 QB hits. **Pro Bowls:** None

27. HOUSTON

DEANDRE HOPKINS | WR | CLEMSON

Houston (2013-19), Arizona (2020-22) Hopkins was a prolific receiver in Houston, amassing 632 catches for 8,602 yards and 54 TDs in seven seasons. He continued his productive ways in Arizona, although he's seen his production decline due to injury (2021) and a PED suspension (2022). Hopkins ranks second only to Julio Jones among active players in both receptions and receiving yards. **Pro Bowls:** 5 (2015, 2017-20)



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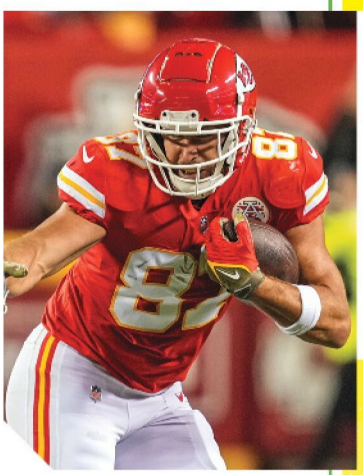
28. DENVER
SYLVESTER WILLIAMS
DT | NORTH CAROLINA
Denver (2013-16), Tennessee (2017), Detroit (2018), Miami (2018), L.A. Chargers (2019), Denver (2020) Williams doesn't have a whole lot of production to show for a career that lasted eight seasons and six different stops, although he did win a Super Bowl ring in Denver. He collected 142 tackles over 63 starts in his career, with 5.5 sacks. **Pro Bowls:** None

29. MINNESOTA
CORDARRELLE PATTERSON
WR | TENNESSEE
Minnesota (2013-16), Oakland (2017), New England (2018), Chicago (2019-20), Atlanta (2021-22) The electrifying Patterson has carved out an interesting career path in the NFL, serving as a historically elite special teams weapon and then becoming an unlikely star as a dual-threat running back. Patterson, who holds the NFL record for kick return touchdowns with nine, earned first-team All-Pro honors four times as a return specialist before signing with Atlanta and transitioning to the backfield, where he produced 1,166 rushing and receiving yards and 11 TDs in 2021. **Pro Bowls:** 4 (2013, 2016, 2019-20)



30. ST. LOUIS
ALEC OGLETREE | LB | GEORGIA
St. Louis/L.A. Rams (2013-17), N.Y. Giants (2018-19), N.Y. Jets (2020), Chicago (2021) The second Georgia linebacker selected (after Jarvis Jones), Ogletree was the more successful of the two, posting 136 tackles and earning second-team All-Pro honors in 2016. **Pro Bowls:** None

31. DALLAS
TRAVIS FREDERICK | C | WISCONSIN
Dallas (2013-19) Frederick was on a Hall of Fame track before a bout of Guillain-Barré syndrome, earning Pro Bowl nods in five of his seven seasons and serving as an anchor on Dallas' O-line. **Pro Bowls:** 5 (2014-17, 2019)

32. BALTIMORE
MATT ELAM | S | FLORIDA
Baltimore (2013-16) Elam lasted only three seasons due to poor play and a string of legal issues. although he has attempted to extend his career in the CFL, Indoor Football League (for the Tucson Sugar Skulls!) and XFL. **Pro Bowls:** None

Best Picks

Round 2 — Pick 36 **DARIUS SLAY**
CB, Mississippi State (Detroit) Slay has been one of the league's most consistent ballhawks over seven years with the Lions and three with the Eagles. A first-team All-Pro in 2017 — when he led the NFL with eight INTs and 26 passes defended — Slay has been a five-time Pro Bowler, posting 26 INTs for 379 return yards and two pick-sixes, along with four fumble recoveries for 154 yards and two scoop-and-scores in his career.

Round 3 — Pick 63 **TRAVIS KELCE**
TE, Cincinnati (Kansas City) The Chiefs had the No. 1 overall pick and ended up landing the best player in the draft class with the first pick ... of the third round. The 6'5", 255-pound Kelce is among the greatest tight ends in history. He is on a run of eight straight Pro Bowls and seven straight 1,000-yard seasons, racking up 801 catches for 10,263 receiving yards and 71 total TDs in the regular season and another 133 catches for 1,548 yards and 16 TDs in the postseason — including three Super Bowl appearances and wins in Super Bowls LIV and LVII.

Round 4 — Pick 109 **DAVID BAKHTIARI**
T, Colorado (Green Bay) With respect to the undisputed best fullback of this generation, Kyle Juszczyk, finding a franchise left tackle in the fourth round is more valuable. Bakhtiari has covered Aaron Rodgers' blindside from the moment he arrived at Lambeau Field. For five straight seasons from 2016-20, Bakhtiari was named either first- or second-team All-Pro and was rewarded with a four-year, $105.5 million contract in 2020, making him the highest-paid O-lineman in NFL history at the time.

Round 5 — Pick 159 **MICAH HYDE**
DB, Iowa (Green Bay) During four seasons in Green Bay and six in Buffalo, Hyde has earned a reputation as one of the highest-IQ and most versatile defensive backs in football, lining up at both safety spots and nickel back after beginning his career on the outside at cornerback. A two-time second-team All-Pro, Hyde has 22 INTs for 228 return yards and one TD, along with eight fumble recoveries, five forced fumbles and five sacks.

Round 6 — Pick 181 **LATAVIUS MURRAY**
RB, UCF (Oakland) A bruising 6'3", 230-pound power back, Murray has been trucking defenders for a decade, playing for the Raiders, Vikings, Saints, Ravens and Broncos along the way. Murray made the Pro Bowl in 2015, rushing for 1,066 yards and six scores. Murray followed up that effort with a 12-TD campaign in 2016. Even into his 30s, Murray has proven to be a dependable situational back in short-yardage and goal-line situations.

Round 7 — Pick 218 **JORDAN POYER**
DB, Oregon State (Philadelphia) Another versatile DB with off-the-charts intangibles who ended up in Buffalo, Poyer saw his career get off to a rocky start when he was released by Philadelphia as a rookie. After being a spot-starter in Cleveland, Poyer became a full-time starter and full-fledged star after arriving in Buffalo in 2017. Poyer was a first-team All-Pro in 2021 and a Pro Bowler in 2022. Poyer has 24 INTs, 11 sacks, eight forced fumbles and seven fumble recoveries.

JAY BIGGERSTAFF-USA TODAY SPORTS

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2023 DRAFT RECAP

2023 NFL DRAFT PICKS

ROUND 1

1	Panthers	**Bryce Young**	QB	Alabama
2	Texans	**C.J. Stroud**	QB	Ohio State
3	Texans	**Will Anderson Jr.**	OLB	Alabama
4	Colts	**Anthony Richardson**	QB	Florida
5	Seahawks	**Devon Witherspoon**	CB	Illinois
6	Cardinals	**Paris Johnson Jr.**	OT	Ohio State
7	Raiders	**Tyree Wilson**	DE	Texas Tech
8	Falcons	**Bijan Robinson**	RB	Texas
9	Eagles	**Jalen Carter**	DT	Georgia
10	Bears	**Darnell Wright**	OT	Tennessee
11	Titans	**Peter Skoronski**	OT	Northwestern
12	Lions	**Jahmyr Gibbs**	RB	Alabama
13	Packers	**Lukas Van Ness**	DE	Iowa
14	Steelers	**Broderick Jones**	OT	Georgia
15	Jets	**Will McDonald IV**	OLB	Iowa State
16	Commanders	**Emmanuel Forbes**	CB	Mississippi State
17	Patriots	**Christian Gonzalez**	CB	Oregon
18	Lions	**Jack Campbell**	ILB	Iowa
19	Buccaneers	**Calijah Kancey**	DT	Pittsburgh
20	Seahawks	**Jaxon Smith-Njigba**	WR	Ohio State
21	Chargers	**Quentin Johnston**	WR	TCU
22	Ravens	**Zay Flowers**	WR	Boston College
23	Vikings	**Jordan Addison**	WR	USC
24	Giants	**Deonte Banks**	CB	Maryland
25	Bills	**Dalton Kincaid**	TE	Utah

MICHAEL MAYER
NOTRE DAME

BRYCE YOUNG
ALABAMA

26	Cowboys	**Mazi Smith**	DT	Michigan
27	Jaguars	**Anton Harrison**	OT	Oklahoma
28	Bengals	**Myles Murphy**	DE	Clemson
29	Saints	**Bryan Bresee**	DT	Clemson
30	Eagles	**Nolan Smith**	OLB	Georgia
31	Chiefs	**Felix Anudike-Uzomah**	DE	Kansas State

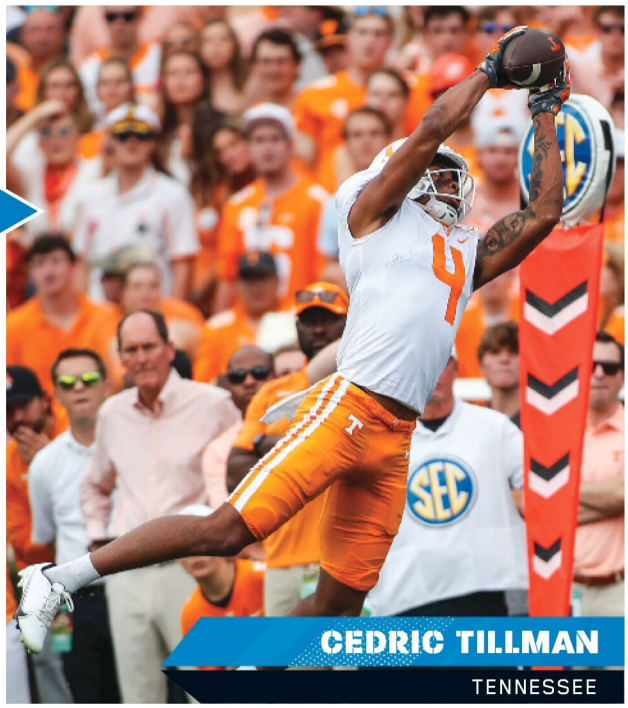
ROUND 2

32	Steelers	**Joey Porter Jr.**	CB	Penn State
33	Titans	**Will Levis**	QB	Kentucky
34	Lions	**Sam LaPorta**	TE	Iowa
35	Raiders	**Michael Mayer**	TE	Notre Dame
36	Rams	**Steve Avila**	OG	TCU
37	Seahawks	**Derick Hall**	OLB	Auburn
38	Falcons	**Matthew Bergeron**	OG	Syracuse
39	Panthers	**Jonathan Mingo**	WR	Ole Miss
40	Saints	**Isaiah Foskey**	DE	Notre Dame
41	Cardinals	**BJ Ojulari**	OLB	LSU
42	Packers	**Luke Musgrave**	TE	Oregon State
43	Jets	**Joe Tippmann**	C	Wisconsin
44	Colts	**JuJu Brents**	CB	Kansas State
45	Lions	**Brian Branch**	S	Alabama
46	Patriots	**Keion White**	DE	Georgia Tech
47	Commanders	**Jartavius Martin**	S	Illinois
48	Buccaneers	**Cody Mauch**	OT	North Dakota State
49	Steelers	**Keeanu Benton**	DT	Wisconsin
50	Packers	**Jayden Reed**	WR	Michigan State
51	Dolphins	**Cam Smith**	CB	South Carolina
52	Seahawks	**Zach Charbonnet**	RB	UCLA
53	Bears	**Gervon Dexter Sr.**	DT	Florida
54	Chargers	**Tuli Tuipulotu**	OLB	USC
55	Chiefs	**Rashee Rice**	WR	SMU
56	Bears	**Tyrique Stevenson**	CB	Miami (Fla.)
57	Giants	**John Michael Schmitz**	C	Minnesota
58	Cowboys	**Luke Schoonmaker**	TE	Michigan
59	Bills	**O'Cyrus Torrence**	OG	Florida
60	Bengals	**DJ Turner II**	CB	Michigan
61	Jaguars	**Brenton Strange**	TE	Penn State
62	Texans	**Juice Scruggs**	C	Penn State
63	Broncos	**Marvin Mims Jr.**	WR	Oklahoma

YOUNG: MARVIN GENTRY/USA TODAY SPORTS; MAYER: MICHAEL CATERINA/USA TODAY SPORTS

ROUND 3

64	Bears	Zacch Pickens	DT	South Carolina
65	Eagles	Tyler Steen	OT	Alabama
66	Eagles	Sydney Brown	S	Illinois
67	Broncos	Drew Sanders	ILB	Arkansas
68	Lions	Hendon Hooker	QB	Tennessee
69	Texans	Tank Dell	WR	Houston
70	Raiders	Byron Young	DT	Alabama
71	Saints	Kendre Miller	RB	TCU
72	Cardinals	Garrett Williams	CB	Syracuse
73	Giants	Jalin Hyatt	WR	Tennessee
74	Browns	Cedric Tillman	WR	Tennessee
75	Falcons	Zach Harrison	DE	Ohio State
76	Patriots	Marte Mapu	ILB	Sacramento State
77	Rams	Byron Young	DE	Tennessee
78	Packers	Tucker Kraft	TE	South Dakota State
79	Colts	Josh Downs	WR	North Carolina
80	Panthers	DJ Johnson	OLB	Oregon
81	Titans	Tyjae Spears	RB	Tulane
82	Buccaneers	YaYa Diaby	DE	Louisville
83	Broncos	Riley Moss	CB	Iowa
84	Dolphins	Devon Achane	RB	Texas A&M
85	Chargers	Daiyan Henley	ILB	Washington State
86	Ravens	Trenton Simpson	ILB	Clemson
87	49ers	Ji'Ayir Brown	S	Penn State
88	Jaguars	Tank Bigsby	RB	Auburn
89	Rams	Kobie Turner	DT	Wake Forest
90	Cowboys	DeMarvion Overshown	ILB	Texas
91	Bills	Dorian Williams	ILB	Tulane
92	Chiefs	Wanya Morris	OT	Oklahoma
93	Steelers	Darnell Washington	TE	Georgia
94	Cardinals	Michael Wilson	WR	Stanford
95	Bengals	Jordan Battle	S	Alabama
96	Lions	Brodric Martin	DT	WKU
97	Commanders	Ricky Stromberg	C	Arkansas
98	Browns	Siaki Ika	DT	Baylor
99	49ers	Jake Moody	K	Michigan
100	Raiders	Tre Tucker	WR	Cincinnati
101	49ers	Cameron Latu	TE	Alabama
102	Vikings	Mekhi Blackmon	CB	USC



ROUND 4

103	Saints	Nick Saldiveri	OT	Old Dominion
104	Raiders	Jakorian Bennett	CB	Maryland
105	Eagles	Kelee Ringo	CB	Georgia
106	Colts	Blake Freeland	OT	BYU
107	Patriots	Jake Andrews	C	Troy
108	Seahawks	Anthony Bradford	OG	LSU
109	Texans	Dylan Horton	DE	TCU
110	Colts	Adetomiwa Adebawore	DE	Northwestern
111	Browns	Dawand Jones	OT	Ohio State
112	Patriots	Chad Ryland	K	Maryland
113	Falcons	Clark Phillips III	CB	Utah
114	Panthers	Chandler Zavala	OG	NC State
115	Bears	Roschon Johnson	RB	Texas
116	Packers	Colby Wooden	DT	Auburn
117	Patriots	Sidy Sow	OG	Eastern Michigan
118	Commanders	Braeden Daniels	OG	Utah
119	Chiefs	Chamarri Conner	S	Virginia Tech
120	Jets	Carter Warren	OT	Pittsburgh
121	Jaguars	Ventrell Miller	ILB	Florida
122	Cardinals	Jon Gaines II	OG	UCLA
123	Seahawks	Cameron Young	DT	Mississippi State
124	Ravens	Tavius Robinson	OLB	Ole Miss
125	Chargers	Derius Davis	WR	TCU
126	Browns	Isaiah McGuire	DE	Missouri
127	Saints	Jake Haener	QB	Fresno State
128	Rams	Stetson Bennett IV	QB	Georgia
129	Cowboys	Viliami Fehoko	DE	San Jose State
130	Jaguars	Tyler Lacy	DE	Oklahoma State
131	Bengals	Charlie Jones	WR	Purdue
132	Steelers	Nick Herbig	OLB	Wisconsin
133	Bears	Tyler Scott	WR	Cincinnati
134	Vikings	Jay Ward	S	LSU
135	Raiders	Aidan O'Connell	QB	Purdue

TILLMAN: JOSHUA L. JONES/USA TODAY SPORTS; JONES: BARBARA PERENIC/USA TODAY SPORTS

ROUND 5

136	Jaguars	**Yasir Abdullah**	OLB	Louisville
137	Commanders	**K.J. Henry**	DE	Clemson
138	Colts	**Darius Rush**	CB	South Carolina
139	Cardinals	**Clayton Tune**	QB	Houston
140	Browns	**Dorian Thompson-Robinson**	QB	UCLA
141	Vikings	**Jaquelin Roy**	DT	LSU
142	Browns	**Cameron Mitchell**	CB	Northwestern
143	Jets	**Israel Abanikanda**	RB	Pittsburgh
144	Patriots	**Atonio Mafi**	OG	UCLA
145	Panthers	**Jammie Robinson**	S	Florida State
146	Saints	**Jordan Howden**	S	Minnesota
147	Titans	**Josh Whyle**	TE	Cincinnati
148	Bears	**Noah Sewell**	ILB	Oregon
149	Packers	**Sean Clifford**	QB	Penn State
150	Bills	**Justin Shorter**	WR	Florida
151	Seahawks	**Mike Morris**	DE	Michigan
152	Lions	**Colby Sorsdal**	OT	William & Mary
153	Buccaneers	**SirVocea Dennis**	ILB	Pittsburgh
154	Seahawks	**Olusegun Oluwatimi**	C	Michigan
155	49ers	**Darrell Luter Jr.**	CB	South Alabama
156	Chargers	**Jordan McFadden**	OG	Clemson
157	Ravens	**Kyu Blu Kelly**	CB	Stanford
158	Colts	**Daniel Scott**	S	California
159	Packers	**Dontayvion Wicks**	WR	Virginia
160	Jaguars	**Antonio Johnson**	S	Texas A&M

KEI'TREL CLARK
LOUISVILLE

CLAYTON TUNE
HOUSTON

161	Rams	**Nick Hampton**	OLB	Appalachian State
162	Colts	**Will Mallory**	TE	Miami (Fla.)
163	Bengals	**Chase Brown**	RB	Illinois
164	Vikings	**Jaren Hall**	QB	BYU
165	Bears	**Terell Smith**	CB	Minnesota
166	Chiefs	**BJ Thompson**	OLB	Stephen F. Austin
167	Texans	**Henry To'oTo'o**	ILB	Alabama
168	Cardinals	**Owen Pappoe**	ILB	Auburn
169	Cowboys	**Asim Richards**	OT	North Carolina
170	Raiders	**Christopher Smith II**	S	Georgia
171	Buccaneers	**Payne Durham**	TE	Purdue
172	Giants	**Eric Gray**	RB	Oklahoma
173	49ers	**Robert Beal Jr.**	DE	Georgia
174	Rams	**Warren McClendon Jr.**	OT	Georgia
175	Rams	**Davis Allen**	TE	Clemson
176	Colts	**Evan Hull**	RB	Northwestern
177	Rams	**Puka Nacua**	WR	BYU

ROUND 6

178	Cowboys	**Eric Scott Jr.**	CB	Southern Miss
179	Packers	**Karl Brooks**	DE	Bowling Green
180	Cardinals	**Kei'Trel Clark**	CB	Louisville
181	Buccaneers	**Josh Hayes**	CB	Kansas State
182	Rams	**Tre'Vius Hodges-Tomlinson**	CB	TCU
183	Broncos	**JL Skinner**	S	Boise State
184	Jets	**Zaire Barnes**	OLB	Western Michigan
185	Jaguars	**Parker Washington**	WR	Penn State
186	Titans	**Jaelyn Duncan**	OT	Maryland
187	Patriots	**Kayshon Boutte**	WR	LSU
188	Eagles	**Tanner McKee**	QB	Stanford
189	Rams	**Ochaun Mathis**	DE	Nebraska
190	Browns	**Luke Wypier**	C	Ohio State
191	Buccaneers	**Trey Palmer**	WR	Nebraska
192	Patriots	**Bryce Baringer**	P	Michigan State
193	Commanders	**Chris Rodriguez Jr.**	RB	Kentucky
194	Chiefs	**Keondre Coburn**	DT	Texas

TUNE: TROY TAORMINA/USA TODAY SPORTS; JAMIE RHODES/USA TODAY SPORTS

195	Saints	**A.T. Perry**	WR	Wake Forest
196	Buccaneers	**Jose Ramirez**	OLB	Eastern Michigan
197	Dolphins	**Elijah Higgins**	WR	Stanford
198	Seahawks	**Jerrick Reed II**	S	New Mexico
199	Ravens	**Malaesala Aumavae-Laulu**	OT	Oregon
200	Chargers	**Scott Matlock**	DT	Boise State
201	Texans	**Jarrett Patterson**	C	Notre Dame
202	Jaguars	**Christian Braswell**	CB	Rutgers
203	Raiders	**Amari Burney**	OLB	Florida
204	Jets	**Jarrick Bernard-Converse**	CB	LSU
205	Texans	**Xavier Hutchinson**	WR	Iowa State
206	Bengals	**Andrei Iosivas**	WR	Princeton
207	Packers	**Anders Carlson**	K	Auburn
208	Jaguars	**Erick Hallett II**	S	Pittsburgh
209	Giants	**Tre Hawkins III**	CB	ODU
210	Patriots	**Demario Douglas**	WR	Liberty
211	Colts	**Titus Leo**	ILB	Wagner
212	Cowboys	**Deuce Vaughn**	RB	Kansas State
213	Cardinals	**Dante Stills**	DT	West Virginia
214	Patriots	**Ameer Speed**	CB	Michigan State
215	Rams	**Zach Evans**	RB	Ole Miss
216	49ers	**Dee Winters**	ILB	TCU
217	Bengals	**Brad Robbins**	P	Michigan

ROUND 7

218	Bears	**Travis Bell**	DT	Kennesaw State
219	Lions	**Antoine Green**	WR	North Carolina
220	Jets	**Zach Kuntz**	TE	ODU
221	Colts	**Jaylon Jones**	CB	Texas A&M
222	Vikings	**DeWayne McBride**	RB	UAB
223	Rams	**Ethan Evans**	P	Wingate
224	Falcons	**DeMarcco Hellams**	S	Alabama
225	Falcons	**Jovaughn Gwyn**	OG	South Carolina
226	Jaguars	**Cooper Hodges**	OG	Appalachian State
227	Jaguars	**Raymond Vohasek**	DT	North Carolina
228	Titans	**Colton Dowell**	WR	UT Martin
229	Ravens	**Andrew Vorhees**	OG	USC
230	Bills	**Nick Broeker**	OG	Ole Miss
231	Raiders	**Nesta Jade Silvera**	DT	Arizona State
232	Packers	**Carrington Valentine**	CB	Kentucky
233	Commanders	**Andre Jones Jr.**	OLB	Louisiana
234	Rams	**Jason Taylor II**	S	Oklahoma State
235	Packers	**Lew Nichols III**	RB	Central Michigan
236	Colts	**Jake Witt**	OT	Northern Michigan
237	Seahawks	**Kenny McIntosh**	RB	Georgia
238	Dolphins	**Ryan Hayes**	OT	Michigan
239	Chargers	**Max Duggan**	QB	TCU
240	Jaguars	**Derek Parish**	FB	Houston
241	Steelers	**Cory Trice Jr.**	CB	Purdue
242	Packers	**Anthony Johnson Jr.**	S	Iowa State
243	Giants	**Jordon Riley**	DT	Oregon
244	Cowboys	**Jalen Brooks**	WR	South Carolina
245	Patriots	**Isaiah Bolden**	CB	Jackson State
246	Bengals	**DJ Ivey**	CB	Miami (Fla.)
247	49ers	**Brayden Willis**	TE	Oklahoma
248	Texans	**Brandon Hill**	S	Pittsburgh
249	Eagles	**Moro Ojomo**	DE	Texas
250	Chiefs	**Nic Jones**	CB	Ball State
251	Steelers	**Spencer Anderson**	OG	Maryland
252	Bills	**Alex Austin**	CB	Oregon State
253	49ers	**Ronnie Bell**	WR	Michigan
254	Giants	**Gervarrius Owens**	S	Houston
255	49ers	**Jalen Graham**	OLB	Purdue
256	Packers	**Grant DuBose**	WR	Charlotte
257	Broncos	**Alex Forsyth**	C	Oregon
258	Bears	**Kendall Williamson**	CB	Stanford
259	Rams	**Desjuan Johnson**	DE	Toledo

PERRY: COREY PERRINE/USA TODAY SPORTS; DUGGAN: KIRBY LEE/USA TODAY SPORTS

NFL DRAFT 2023

K.C.'s Moment in the Sun

BY BRYAN FISCHER

When the NFL decided to turn the draft into a traveling road show with stops in cities across the country, many wondered if fans would continue to turn out year after year in large numbers to cheer for names being read off cards.

Upon the conclusion of the 2023 NFL Draft, however, it's safe to say that there are no doubters left.

The stars aligned to bring the marquee offseason event to the home of the reigning Super Bowl champions, to great effect. A record 54.4 million people in the U.S. tuned in on television across three days, and the NFL estimated that 312,000 fans showed up in person to watch Patrick Mahomes and Travis Kelce parade the Lombardi Trophy around before NFL commissioner Roger Goodell began announcing the next crop of future superstars.

GOODELL: KIRBY LEE-USA TODAY SPORTS; YOUNG: JIM DEDMON-USA TODAY SPORTS; GIBBS: KIRTHMON F. DOZIER/ USATNSYNDICATION

The Panthers certainly hope they have one on their hands, as they made 2021 Heisman Trophy winner Bryce Young the first Alabama player taken No. 1 overall in the modern era. It kicked off another run for the Crimson Tide, who now have had an offensive player drafted in the first round in a record nine consecutive drafts. Young's defensive teammate Will Anderson Jr. went third overall to Houston, while Detroit surprisingly drafted backfield weapon Jahmyr Gibbs at No. 12 as its tailback of the future.

No. 1 overall pick Bryce Young

There was plenty of drama after Young's name was called, and much of it came at Young's position. Just a year after only one quarterback (Kenny Pickett) was selected in the first 32 picks, two others wound up going in the first four

No. 12 pick Jahmyr Gibbs

selections: The Texans drafted Ohio State's C.J. Stroud second, while the Colts tabbed Florida's Anthony Richardson two picks later. It marked just the fourth time three of the first four picks were quarterbacks. All told, 14 signal-callers were drafted (five more than last year), and a record 12 of those went in the first five rounds.

Impressively, the SEC was responsible for five of the QBs taken, even if Kentucky quarterback Will Levis became a Day 1 sideshow sitting forlornly in the green room. The Titans traded up to draft him 34th overall.

The offensive improvements weren't just at quarterback, however, as teams across the league added several new skill-position talents.

Gibbs and Atlanta's No. 8 overall pick Bijan Robinson became the first pair of running backs taken among the top dozen selections since 2017, while four consecutive receivers

No. 8 pick Bijan Robinson

KIRBY LEE-USA TODAY SPORTS

were drafted in the first round (picks No. 20-23) for the first time ever. This season also set a common draft record for number of tight ends drafted on the first two days — nine, including an impressive five in the second round alone. The Buffalo Bills traded up to make Utah's Dalton Kincaid the only first-rounder of the bunch, but the depth at the position in 2023 was apparent.

The most memorable moment of the draft, however, was late in the sixth round Saturday, when the Dallas Cowboys came on the clock. The team had been criticized by some for not taking a running back to complement starter Tony Pollard in earlier rounds but made up for it with the emotional selection of Kansas State's Deuce Vaughn with pick No. 212.

THE POWER 2

To the surprise of absolutely nobody, the SEC once again reigned supreme when it came to the total number of NFL draft picks in 2023, falling just shy of its own record (65, in 2021 and 2022) but still managing an impressive 62 selections from the conference where it just means more. It was the 17th consecutive year the SEC had the most players drafted.

In contrast to other years, the SEC at least had some company at the top in 2023, as the Big Ten came in a close second with a record 55 selections and even tied for the same number of first rounders (nine, most since 1995). In all, 45 percent of the draft's haul — including 55 of the top 100 drafted — hailed from one of the two leagues, underscoring how college football's upper echelon has evolved into a Power 2.

Conference	No. of Picks	Conference	No. of Picks
SEC	62	Sun Belt	9
Big Ten	55	MAC	7
ACC	32	Independents	7
Big 12	30	Mountain West	5
Pac-12	27	Conference USA	3
AAC	10	Division II	2
FCS	10		

The diminutive — he's listed at 5-foot-6 — but speedy Vaughn rushed for 1,558 yards to lead the Wildcats to a Big 12 title last season. However, it was the manner in which the ex-KSU star was informed that made things incredibly special.

Vaughn's father, Chris — the Cowboys' assistant college scouting director — was in the Cowboys' war room when the pick was made, and owner Jerry Jones actually told the elder Vaughn to inform his son he was going to wear that famous star on his helmet this fall.

"You want to come to work with me next week?" Chris Vaughn asked his son while fighting back tears.

"I wouldn't mind at all," Deuce Vaughn responded to laughs and raucous applause from Dallas executives.

While nobody knows just how Vaughn's career in the NFL will transpire, his start in the league was certainly cemented as one of the NFL Draft's all-time great moments and quite the capper for an eventful three days in Kansas City.

continued on page 38

from page 37

GEORGIA MAKES HISTORY

If winning back-to-back national titles didn't already prove that Kirby Smart's program was among the elite talent-producing programs in college football, the incredible number of players sent to the league out of Athens surely has. Now there are a string of records to underscore it.

By the time the seventh round concluded in Kansas City, NFL teams had picked 10 Bulldogs (tied for the most by any school this year), a figure that helped the Dawgs set the all-time mark for most draft picks over a two- (25) and three-year (34) span. Both figures have a good shot at being re-broken in Detroit come 2024, but things are even more impressive when you dive into the numbers a bit more.

Take, for example, the 2021 UGA defense that helped deliver the school's first national title in four decades by limiting opponents to just 10.2 points per game. Safety Christopher Smith II (fifth round, Las Vegas Raiders) remarkably became the 10th starter from the unit to be drafted in the past two years, joining five teammates, including linebacker Nolan Smith (30th overall, Philadelphia Eagles), who went in the first round. Even four backups from the group were snatched up by NFL teams, headlined by the ninth overall pick, DT Jalen Carter (also to the Eagles).

Then there's the offense, which saw two teams even double-dip with Bulldogs. Pittsburgh refortified up front with offensive tackle Broderick Jones (14th overall) in the first round before nabbing mammoth tight end Darnell Washington in the third round. The Los Angeles Rams added Stetson Bennett IV (fifth round, 128th overall) to a quarterback room that already includes Georgia alum Matthew Stafford and came back in the next round to draft offensive tackle Warren McClendon Jr.

Still, nobody quite holds a candle to Eagles GM Howie Roseman when it comes to affection for players in red and black. In addition to drafting Carter and Smith in the first round, Philadelphia also moved up in the fourth round to take cornerback Kelee Ringo — the fifth Georgia defender drafted by the franchise in the past two years. For good measure, the team also acquired ex-UGA running back D'Andre Swift in a draft-day trade with the Detroit Lions.

"I'm a Florida Gator, do you know how much it hurts my soul to take all these Bulldogs?" Roseman joked while informing Smith he was taking him at the end of the first round.

While Roseman's status with his alumni association is in question, something that probably isn't will be a few more trips down to Athens to scout the next wave of Georgia players. Given how productive Smart's program is right now, the Eagles' general manager will be far from alone between the hedges.

Philly Dawgs: Pick No. 9 Jalen Carter (above); Pick No. 30 Nolan Smith (below); Pick No. 105 Kelee Ringo (below, bottom)

SMITH: KIRBY LEE/USA TODAY SPORTS; CARTER: CHRIS KWIECINSKI/USA TODAY SPORTS; RINGO: JORDAN PRATHER/USA TODAY SPORTS

TCU DRAFT CLASS BACKS UP CFP RUN

Last season was a magical one for TCU, which went from Big 12 afterthought in August to the College Football National Championship Game in January — all with a first-year head coach in Sonny Dykes. NFL scouts were paying attention, as the program led its conference in draft picks (eight) and rubbed elbows with some of the elite bluebloods in producing an impressive draft haul. Only three other schools had more players selected in 2023: Georgia, Alabama and Michigan.

"They've got a really outstanding team," Chargers head coach Brandon Staley said. "It's the same as a University of Georgia or University of Alabama. It's one of the top college programs."

While the Horned Frogs did get blown out in the national title game at SoFi Stadium, they apparently still left an impression on the Los Angeles franchises that call the place home, as the Chargers drafted three TCU players (WR Quentin Johnston 21st overall, WR Derius Davis in the fourth round and QB Max Duggan in the seventh round) and the Rams another two (second-round guard Steve Avila and sixth-round corner Tre'Vius Hodges-Tomlinson).

MOST PICKS BY SCHOOL

School	Picks
Alabama	10
Georgia	10
Michigan	9
TCU	8
Clemson	6
Florida	6
Ohio State	6
Oregon	6
Penn State	6
Pittsburgh	6
Auburn	5
Maryland	5
Oklahoma	5
Purdue	5
South Carolina	5
Stanford	5
Tennessee	5
Texas	5

No. 21 pick
Quentin Johnston

FOOTBALL FAMILY MATTERS

Every time the NFL Draft rolls around, there's bound to be a name or two that makes you do a double take and realize just how many years have ticked off the calendar. That was once again the case, as one generation of pros passed the torch to the next. These picks prove that the NFL is a family business.

▶ Ohio State's Paris Johnson Jr. was the first offensive tackle off the board with the sixth overall pick, but what really made his selection special was that he was drafted by the Arizona Cardinals — the same franchise that took his father in the fifth round back in 1999. The team also took LSU linebacker BJ Ojulari, the brother of 2021 New York Giants draft pick Azeez Ojulari, in the second round.

Joey Porter Jr. was a mainstay on the Pittsburgh sidelines as a youngster while his father was an All-Pro linebacker. Now the younger Porter also will be suiting up in Dad's black and gold after the Steelers took him 32nd overall.

▶ Northwestern offensive tackle Peter Skoronski was taken 11th overall by the Tennessee Titans. His grandfather, Bob, played 11 seasons for the Green Bay Packers — also at left tackle — from 1956-68.

▶ Tennessee wideout Cedric Tillman was drafted in the third round by the Cleveland Browns; he is the son of the former Denver and Jacksonville receiver who shares the same name and was selected in the 1992 NFL Draft.

▶ Josh Downs, the 79th overall selection by Indianapolis, went 16 picks earlier than his dad, Gary Downs, did back in the 1994 NFL Draft — but one round later than uncle Dre' Bly did back in 1999.

▶ Illinois safety Sydney Brown was snagged by the Philadelphia Eagles at pick No. 66 in the third round, while twin brother Chase Brown was drafted in the fifth round by the Cincinnati Bengals.

▶ Former Chargers great LaDainian Tomlinson may have some split loyalties at SoFi Stadium considering his nephew and fellow TCU alum Tre'Vius Hodges-Tomlinson was drafted by the Los Angeles Rams in the sixth round.

PORTER: KIRBY LEE-USA TODAY SPORTS
JOHNSTON: JOE RONDONE/ USATNSYNDICATION

2024

DRAFT OUTLOOK

1	QB	Caleb Williams	USC
2	WR	Marvin Harrison Jr.	Ohio State
3	TE	Brock Bowers	Georgia
4	OT	Olumuyiwa Fashanu	Penn State
5	OT	Joe Alt	Notre Dame
6	QB	Drake Maye	North Carolina
7	DE	Jared Verse	Florida State
8	CB	Kool-Aid McKinstry	Alabama
9	OLB	Dallas Turner	Alabama
10	DT	Maason Smith	LSU
11	DE	JT Tuimoloau	Ohio State
12	ILB	Jeremiah Trotter Jr.	Clemson
13	DT	Michael Hall Jr.	Ohio State
14	OT	JC Latham	Alabama
15	WR	Emeka Egbuka	Ohio State

16	QB	Michael Penix Jr.	Washington
17	CB	Denzel Burke	Ohio State
18	WR	Xavier Worthy	Texas
19	WR	Rome Odunze	Washington
20	OLB	Zion Tupuola-Fetui	Washington
21	DE	Jack Sawyer	Ohio State
22	S	Javon Bullard	Georgia
23	OT	Cooper Beebe	Kansas State
24	RB	TreVeyon Henderson	Ohio State
25	DT	Jer'Zhan Newton	Illinois

26	DT	Tyleik Williams	Ohio State
27	CB	Kamari Lassiter	Georgia
28	OT	Kingsley Suamataia	BYU
29	QB	Bo Nix	Oregon
30	TE	Ja'Tavion Sanders	Texas
31	QB	Quinn Ewers	Texas
32	S	Andrew Mukuba	Clemson
33	G	Donovan Jackson	Ohio State
34	G	Connor Colby	Iowa
35	RB	Rocket Sanders	Arkansas
36	WR	Troy Franklin	Oregon
37	CB	Kalen King	Penn State
38	DE	Bralen Trice	Washington
39	CB	Cooper DeJean	Iowa
40	S	James Williams	Miami (Fla.)
41	ILB	Smael Mondon Jr.	Georgia
42	S	Calen Bullock	USC
43	DT	Shemar Turner	Texas A&M
44	OT	Blake Fisher	Notre Dame
45	DE	Chop Robinson	Penn State
46	DT	Leonard Taylor III	Miami (Fla.)
47	C	Sedrick Van Pran	Georgia
48	OT	Graham Barton	Duke
48	G	Christian Mahogany	Boston College
50	DE	Korey Foreman	USC

HARRISON: OHIO STATE ATHLETICS; WORTHY: SCOTT WACHTER/USA TODAY SPORTS

2024 TOP 5 PER POSITION

QUARTERBACKS

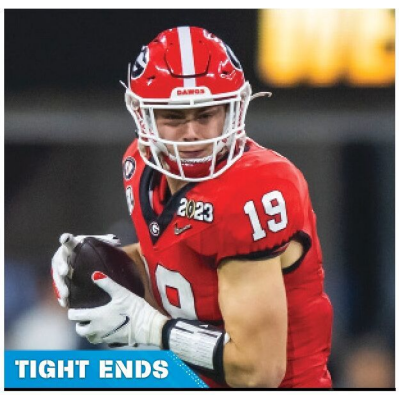
1. **Caleb Williams**, USC, Jr.
2. **Drake Maye**, North Carolina, So.
3. **Michael Penix Jr.**, Washington, Sr.
4. **Bo Nix**, Oregon, Sr.
5. **Quinn Ewers**, Texas, So.

RUNNING BACKS

1. **TreVeyon Henderson**, Ohio State, Jr.
2. **Rocket Sanders**, Arkansas, Jr.
3. **Braelon Allen**, Wisconsin, Jr.
4. **Will Shipley**, Clemson, Jr.
5. **Jace McClellan**, Alabama, Sr.

WIDE RECEIVERS

1. **Marvin Harrison Jr.**, Ohio State, Jr.
2. **Emeka Egbuka**, Ohio State, Jr.
3. **Xavier Worthy**, Texas, So.
4. **Rome Odunze**, Washington, Jr.
5. **Troy Franklin**, Oregon, Jr.



TIGHT ENDS

1. **Brock Bowers**, Georgia, Jr.
2. **Ja'Tavion Sanders**, Texas, Jr.
3. **Michael Trigg**, Ole Miss, Jr.
4. **Erick All**, Iowa, Sr.
5. **Arik Gilbert**, Nebraska, Jr.

OFFENSIVE TACKLES

1. **Olumuyiwa Fashanu**, Penn State, Jr.
2. **Joe Alt**, Notre Dame, Jr.
3. **JC Latham**, Alabama, Jr.
4. **Cooper Beebe**, Kansas State, Sr.
5. **Kingsley Suamataia**, BYU, So.

OFFENSIVE GUARDS

1. **Donovan Jackson**, Ohio State, Jr.
2. **Connor Colby**, Iowa, Jr.
3. **Christian Mahogany**, Boston Coll., Sr.
4. **Xavier Truss**, Georgia, Sr.
5. **Layden Robinson**, Texas A&M, Sr.

CENTERS

1. **Sedrick Van Pran**, Georgia, Jr.
2. **Bryce Foster**, Texas A&M, Jr.
3. **Andrew Raym**, Oklahoma, Sr.
4. **Drake Nugent**, Michigan, Sr.
5. **Seth McLaughlin**, Alabama, Sr.

DEFENSIVE ENDS

1. **Jared Verse**, Florida State, Jr.
2. **JT Tuimoloau**, Ohio State, Jr.
3. **Jack Sawyer**, Ohio State, Jr.
4. **Bralen Trice**, Washington, Jr.
5. **Chop Robinson**, Penn State, Jr.

DEFENSIVE TACKLES

1. **Maason Smith**, LSU, So.
2. **Michael Hall Jr.**, Ohio State, So.
3. **Jer'Zhan Newton**, Illinois, Jr.
4. **Tyleik Williams**, Ohio State, Jr.
5. **Shemar Turner**, Texas A&M, Jr.

INSIDE LINEBACKERS

1. **Jeremiah Trotter Jr.**, Clemson, Jr.
2. **Smael Mondon Jr.**, Georgia, Jr.
3. **Tommy Eichenberg**, Ohio State, Sr.
4. **Jackson Mitchell**, Connecticut, Sr.
5. **Jamon Dumas-Johnson**, Georgia, Jr.

OUTSIDE LINEBACKERS

1. **Dallas Turner**, Alabama, Jr.
2. **Zion Tupuola-Fetui**, Washington, Sr.
3. **Eric Gentry**, USC, Jr.
4. **Princely Umanmielen**, Florida, Sr.
5. **Adisa Isaac**, Penn State, Sr.

CORNERBACKS

1. **Kool-Aid McKinstry**, Alabama, Jr.
2. **Denzel Burke**, Ohio State, Jr.
3. **Kamari Lassiter**, Georgia, Jr.
4. **Kalen King**, Penn State, Jr.
5. **Cooper DeJean**, Iowa, Jr.

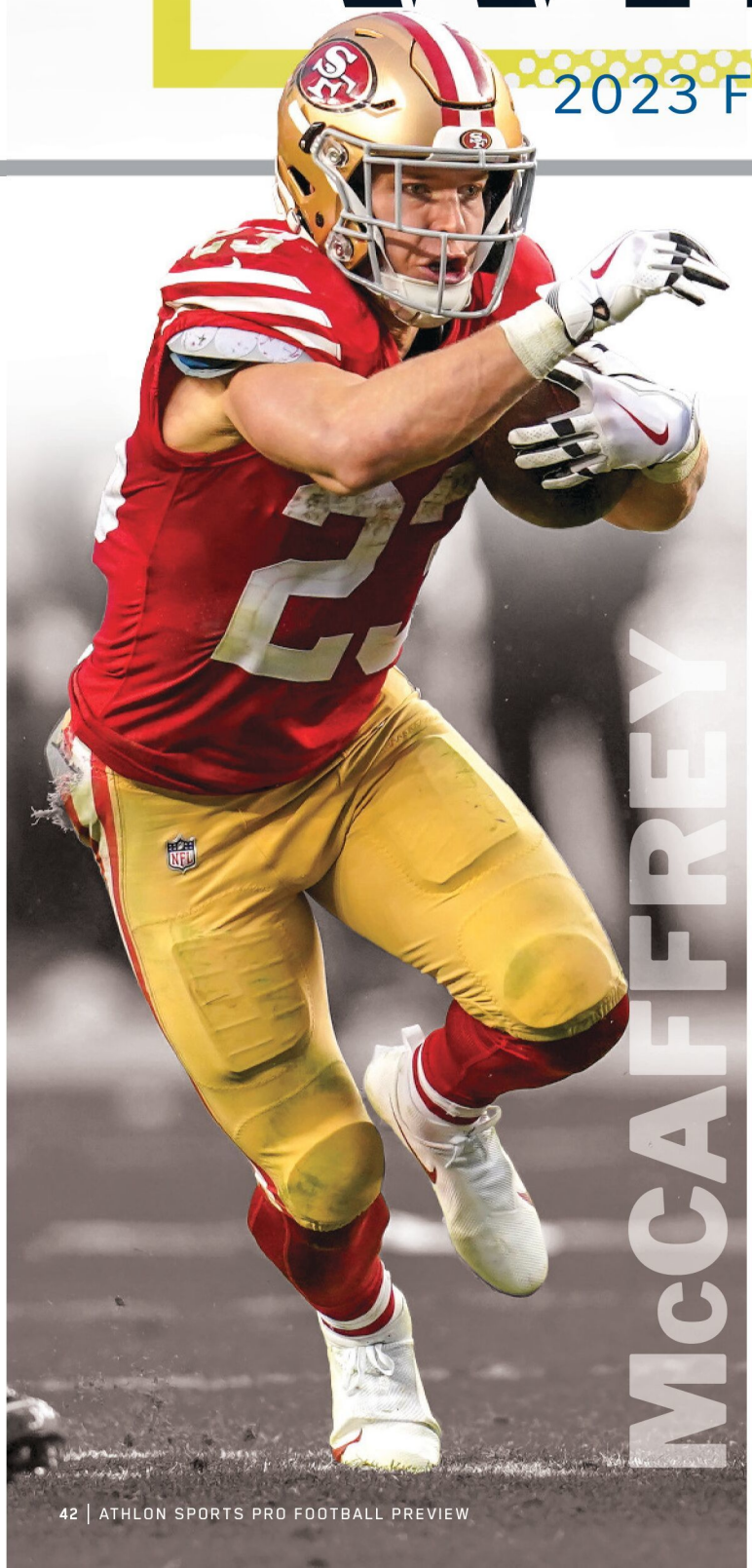
SAFETIES

1. **Javon Bullard**, Georgia, Jr.
2. **Andrew Mukuba**, Clemson, Jr.
3. **James Williams**, Miami (Fla.), Jr.
4. **Calen Bullock**, USC, Jr.
5. **Cole Bishop**, Utah, Jr.

WILLIAMS: KIYOSHI MIO/USA TODAY SPORTS; BOWERS: MARK J. REBILAS/USA TODAY SPORTS

WHO'S

2023 FANTASY FOOTBALL



CHRISTIAN McCAFFREY is the clear choice at 1.01. He's coming off his healthiest and most productive season since 2019, and that was with a midseason trade to adjust to on the fly. CMC was the RB1 in PPR from Week 7 on after he was dealt to the 49ers. He also scored in eight of 11 games and had five top-five finishes at his position with his new team. The situation at quarterback in San Francisco is a bit murky at the moment, but there's no one better than Kyle Shanahan to find a way to make the offense hum regardless. McCaffrey has familiarity playing with quarterbacks Brock Purdy and Sam Darnold, another plus heading into 2023. There are enough questions about the other candidates for the first pick that McCaffrey feels like the safe choice without sacrificing any upside. In his first full season with the Niners, CMC should come off draft boards first.

— KYLE WOOD, SI FANTASY/BETTING

If you're going to win your league, take the upside married with talent and scheme. **CHRISTIAN McCAFFREY** has a well-documented injury history, but the 49ers running back is an All-Pro season waiting to happen in coach Kyle Shanahan's offense. Only 27 years old, McCaffrey rushed for 1,139 yards and eight touchdowns last year while notching 52 catches, 464 yards and four scores.

Now entering his first full season with San Francisco, McCaffrey should get a full workload as Shanahan tries to maintain his elite rushing game while fully integrating a young quarterback in either Trey Lance or Brock Purdy. McCaffrey will be especially valuable in PPR leagues considering the high volume of targets he'll get as a primary target in the quick game, or as a release valve when a play breaks down.

While the injuries are always concerning with McCaffrey, he's still played every game in four of his six seasons, and the value he brings is too much to pass up.

— MATT VERDERAME, SI NFL STAFF WRITER

CARY EDMONDSON/USA TODAY SPORTS

NO. 1?

KIRBY LEE/USA TODAY SPORTS

One of the most important things to consider when drafting first overall is positional scarcity. There's a reason Value Based Drafting (VBD) has been around for three decades. Quarterbacks may be the highest scorers, and wide receivers may have less injury risk, but the shallow pool of bell-cow backs makes it imperative to take a running back first overall. You won't be drafting again until the 20th or 24th pick (or later in deeper leagues), so this is your one chance to assure yourself of a stud running back.

No running back is without risk, but **CHRISTIAN McCAFFREY** is the best bet this year. His value in the passing game raises his floor, especially in PPR leagues, and playing in Kyle Shanahan's system gives him far more upside than he had in Carolina. If you're worried about his injury risk, make sure to take his handcuff, Elijah Mitchell, a round or two earlier than you normally would, since there's always value in a starting 49ers running back. And remember: McCaffrey has finished among the top three in non-QB scoring in the three seasons since 2018 in which he played a full slate.

— BEN WEINRIB, ATHLON SPORTS

The league's best "do-it-all" running back with the league's best rushing attack play-caller is a dream-like scenario we all saw in reality last year when the 49ers traded for **CHRISTIAN McCAFFREY**. From Weeks 7-18, McCaffrey led all running backs with 238 fantasy points and 21.7 fantasy points per game in PPR formats. Only McCaffrey, Austin Ekeler and Josh Jacobs surpassed 230 points during that stretch. In fact, Derrick Henry and Tony Pollard were the only other rushers to eclipse 190 fantasy points in that time frame, with no other back surpassing 170.

Saquon Barkley scored 159 fantasy points in this time frame, good enough for RB10. That's a 79-point difference, an average of six points a week (practically an extra TD), between RB1 (McCaffrey) and RB10 (Barkley). It doesn't matter who's under center in San Francisco, as the focal point of the offense will be McCaffrey. Only four teams have landed in the top 10 for rushing attempts in each of the last two years: Philadelphia, Baltimore, Cleveland and yep... San Francisco. And now that Kyle Shanahan has the ultimate playmaker in his backfield for the whole season, expect the 49ers to land on this list again. If volume is king, production off that volume is queen and McCaffrey is sitting on the throne representing both royals.

— BILL ENRIGHT, SI FANTASY/BETTING

Let me just start off by saying I hate having the No. 1 pick in fantasy drafts. Having my pick of the litter at the top is not worth the pain of then sitting on my hands and not getting to pick again until No. 24. And for that reason, even though I recognize Justin Jefferson might be the best fantasy weapon in the NFL right now, I'm compelled to take a running back with the No. 1 pick.

Here's why: If you take Jefferson at No. 1, you won't get an elite running back at No. 24. But there are still plenty of stud receivers at that point. Running back is much thinner in fantasy, so I'd rather make sure I get at least one big-time back.

Who would that be? I'd be very tempted to go for Saquon Barkley, as an improved Giants passing game will prevent defenses from keying on him all the time. But I'll play it safe and take **AUSTIN EKELER**. A top-two fantasy back each of the last two years, Ekeler's combination of running and pass-catching skills makes him a reliable superstar. And it's a contract year for Ekeler, so he'll be extra-motivated.

— CRAIG ELLENPORT, SI FANTASY/BETTING

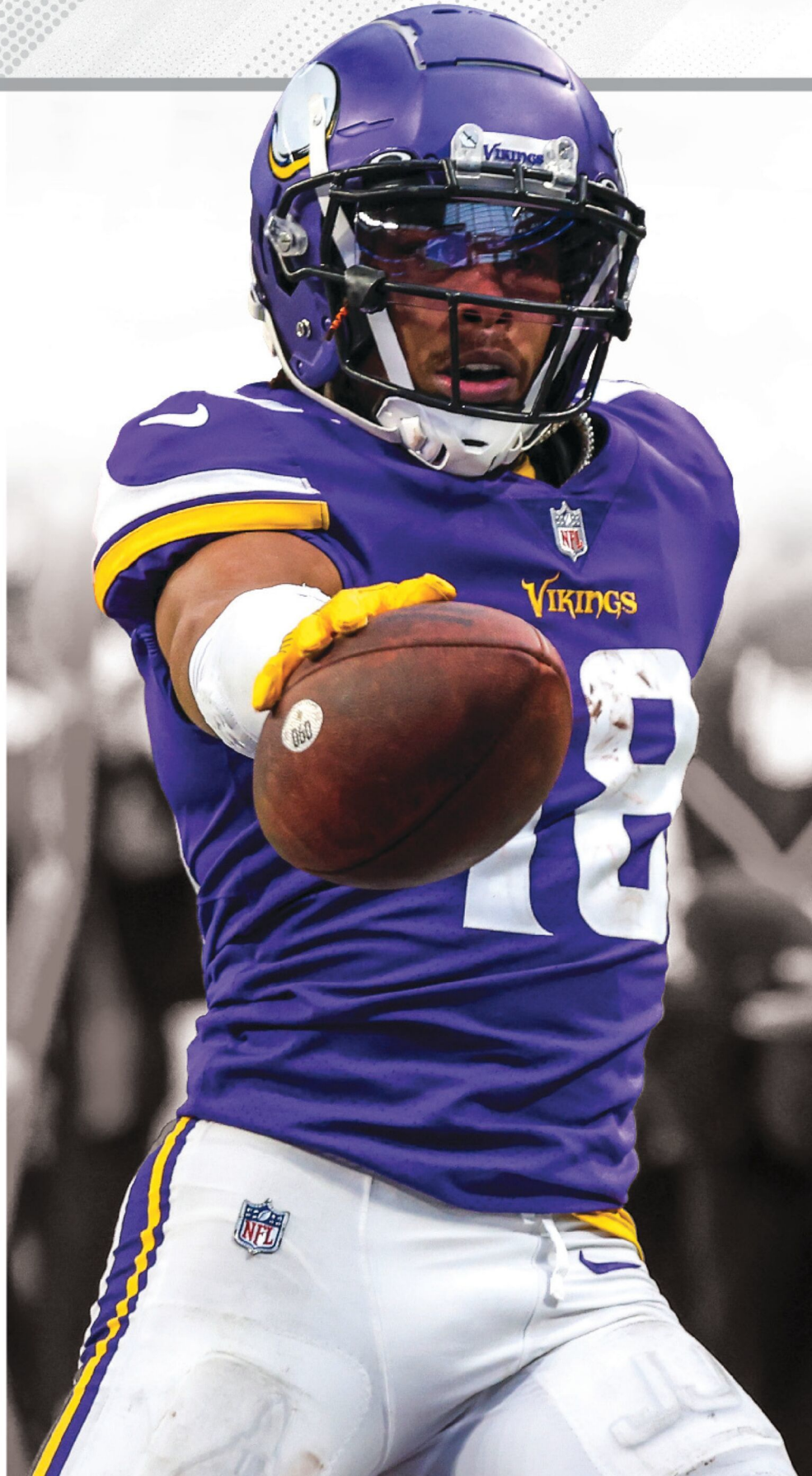
WHO'S NO.1?

JUSTIN JEFFERSON is going to be my 1.01. Not only did he lead all fantasy wideouts last season with a whopping 368 PPR points, but that was also 40 points more than the top-scoring running back, Josh Jacobs, whom no one had taken in the first round. In fact, in each of his three seasons in the NFL, Jefferson has finished as the WR4 or better. Jefferson has no lingering injury concerns, he's only 24, and he's earned his spot at the top of the board.

— JENNIFER PIACENTI,
SI FANTASY/BETTING

JUSTIN JEFFERSON, the NFL's Offensive Player of the Year, dominated in 2022 under new head coach Kevin O'Connell. Jefferson was the focal point of an offense that threw the ball more than 60 percent of the time because of a struggling running game. Does that change in 2023? Probably, especially with Minnesota signing tight end Josh Oliver to block for Alexander Mattison and possibly Dalvin Cook (we're still waiting to see if the Vikings trade him). Just how important is Jefferson to the Vikings offense? His targets have increased from 125 in 2020 to 167 in '21 to 184 in '22. So there's no doubt that quarterback Kirk Cousins is going to target Jefferson at least 10 times per game. If there's an area where we'd like to see Jefferson become more dominant, it's in the red zone. He has only 25 career touchdowns in three years, but those numbers should increase with Adam Thielen now in Carolina. Plus, with a more balanced attack, Jefferson should see 1-on-1 coverage more than he did last season.

— JOHN PLUYM,
SI MANAGING EDITOR



I've been in the fantasy business for over two decades, and I've almost always had a running back listed as my top overall pick. But as Yoda once said, "You must unlearn what you have learned." And what I have learned is that even though backs remain vital in fantasy football, wide receivers are now every bit as valuable. And for those in PPR leagues, **JUSTIN JEFFERSON** has moved past Christian McCaffrey and Austin Ekeler as my top pick heading into 2023 fantasy drafts. The superstar wide receiver has seen his point totals increase in each of his first three NFL seasons, and only Ekeler had more points than him among non-quarterbacks in 2022. Wide receivers also tend to stay healthier than running backs, who endure more physical punishment than any other offensive skill position. It still feels odd not promoting a runner, but Jefferson is simply too good to pass up with the No. 1 overall choice.

— MICHAEL FABIANO, SI FANTASY/BETTING

I've been opposed to taking wide receivers in the first round, but times have changed, and **JUSTIN JEFFERSON** exists. The reigning Offensive Player of the Year will outperform every running back because the Vikings will have no choice but to force-feed Jefferson with Adam Thielen now playing for the Panthers. Austin Ekeler could be a good second option, but he recently requested a trade from the Chargers and his smaller frame might force him to take less touches this season. As for Christian McCaffrey, there are many mouths to feed with the 49ers and "CMC" is heading into his seventh NFL season. Count on Jefferson to flirt with a 2,000-yard receiving season and possibly end the season as a triple crown winner in yards, receptions and touchdowns.

— GILBERTO MANZANO, SI NFL STAFF WRITER

JEFFERSON: MATT KROHN/USA TODAY SPORTS
CHASE: SAM GREENE/THE ENQUIRER

I've always been on Team Running Back in the first round. And while you can't predict injuries — sadly, I've been burned by Jonathan Taylor, Christian McCaffrey and Saquon Barkley, just to name a few, over the past couple of seasons — this is the year I'm finally changing my strategy. So allow me to make the case for taking a former LSU receiver with the No. 1 pick this year. Just not the one you think.

Yes, Minnesota's Justin Jefferson rightly will be atop many draft boards — and he's a popular pick among this group. But I've got a hunch that this will be the season Cincinnati's **JA'MARR CHASE** ascends to another level.

Chase missed five games last season after suffering a freak hip injury while being tackled in the end zone. Despite that, only five receivers had more touchdowns than Chase (nine) in 2022. If he had played a full season, Chase was on pace to have 190 targets, 123 catches, 1,482 yards and 13 TDs — numbers that rivaled or would have exceeded Jefferson's ... or any other receiver in the NFL. The Bengals star is also the model of consistency and reliability; he has 10 or more targets in 11 of his past 15 regular-season games. And I think the ceiling is even higher for the 2021 NFL Offensive Rookie of the Year (1,455 yards, 13 TDs). So if all things are relatively equal, I'm going to bet on the star receiver with the better quarterback (Joe Burrow).

— RYAN HUNT, EDITOR EMERITUS

FANTASY POSITION RANKINGS

QUARTERBACKS

Rk	Player	Team
1	Josh Allen	BUF
2	Patrick Mahomes	KC
3	Jalen Hurts	PHI
4	Joe Burrow	CIN
5	Justin Herbert	LAC
6	Lamar Jackson	BAL
7	Trevor Lawrence	JAC
8	Deshaun Watson	CLE
9	Justin Fields	CHI
10	Dak Prescott	DAL
11	Geno Smith	SEA
12	Kirk Cousins	MIN
13	Tua Tagovailoa	MIA
14	Aaron Rodgers	NYJ
15	Jared Goff	DET
16	Daniel Jones	NYG
17	Russell Wilson	DEN
18	Bryce Young	CAR
19	Matthew Stafford	LAR
20	Kenny Pickett	PIT
21	Mac Jones	NE
22	Jordan Love	GB
23	Jimmy Garoppolo	LV
24	Derek Carr	NO
25	Anthony Richardson	IND
26	C.J. Stroud	HOU
27	Ryan Tannehill	TEN
28	Kyler Murray	ARI
29	Desmond Ridder	ATL
30	Baker Mayfield	TB
31	Brock Purdy	SF
32	Sam Howell	WAS
33	Jacoby Brissett	WAS
34	Trey Lance	SF
35	Gardner Minshew	IND
36	Kyle Trask	TB
37	Colt McCoy	ARI
38	Taylor Heinicke	ATL
39	Mike White	MIA
40	Tyler Huntley	BAL
41	Will Levis	TEN
42	Marcus Mariota	PHI
43	Jarrett Stidham	DEN
44	Sam Darnold	SF
45	Mitchell Trubisky	PIT
46	Clayton Tune	ARI
47	Andy Dalton	CAR
48	Tyrod Taylor	NYG
49	PJ Walker	CHI
50	Zach Wilson	NYJ

RUNNING BACKS

Rk	Player	Team
1	Christian McCaffrey	SF
2	Jonathan Taylor	IND
3	Austin Ekeler	LAC
4	Saquon Barkley	NYG
5	Bijan Robinson	ATL
6	Josh Jacobs	LV
7	Tony Pollard	DAL
8	Nick Chubb	CLE
9	Joe Mixon	CIN
10	Derrick Henry	TEN
11	Rhamondre Stevenson	NE
12	Jahmyr Gibbs	DET
13	Najee Harris	PIT
14	Travis Etienne Jr.	JAC
15	Breece Hall	NYJ
16	Dalvin Cook	MIN
17	James Conner	ARI
18	J.K. Dobbins	BAL
19	Miles Sanders	CAR
20	Rachaad White	TB
21	Aaron Jones	GB
22	David Montgomery	DET
23	Kenneth Walker III	SEA
24	Cam Akers	LAR
25	Isiah Pacheco	KC
26	Dameon Pierce	HOU
27	Javonte Williams	DEN
28	Damien Harris	BUF
29	Brian Robinson Jr.	WAS
30	AJ Dillon	GB
31	Alvin Kamara	NO
32	Jamaal Williams	NO
33	D'Andre Swift	PHI
34	Antonio Gibson	WAS
35	Devon Achane	MIA
36	Devin Singletary	HOU
37	Rashaad Penny	PHI
38	James Cook	BUF
39	Jeff Wilson Jr.	MIA
40	Samaje Perine	DEN
41	Jaylen Warren	PIT
42	Tank Bigsby	JAC
43	Zach Charbonnet	SEA
44	Leonard Fournette	FA
45	Jerick McKinnon	KC
46	Tyjae Spears	TEN
47	Michael Carter	NYJ
48	Kyren Williams	LAR
49	Ezekiel Elliott	FA
50	Kenneth Gainwell	PHI
51	Alexander Mattison	MIN
52	Chuba Hubbard	CAR
53	Elijah Mitchell	SF
54	Roschon Johnson	CHI
55	Khalil Herbert	CHI
56	D'Onta Foreman	CHI
57	Raheem Mostert	MIA
58	Cordarrelle Patterson	ATL
59	Kareem Hunt	FA
60	Tyler Allgeier	ATL
61	Chase Edmonds	TB
62	Kendre Miller	NO
63	James Robinson	NE
64	Joshua Kelley	LAC
65	Gus Edwards	BAL
66	Jerome Ford	CLE
67	Travis Homer	CHI
68	Chase Brown	CIN
69	Pierre Strong Jr.	NE
70	Zamir White	LV
71	Zonovan Knight	NYJ
72	Eric Gray	NYG
73	Deuce Vaughn	DAL
74	Ameer Abdullah	LV
75	Chris Evans	CIN
76	Malik Davis	DAL
77	Boston Scott	PHI
78	Zack Moss	IND
79	Isaiah Spiller	LAC
80	Craig Reynolds	DET

ALLEN: JAMIE SABAU-USA TODAY SPORTS MCCAFFREY: KYLE TERADA-USA TODAY SPORTS

WIDE RECEIVERS

Rk	Player	Team
1	Justin Jefferson	MIN
2	Tyreek Hill	MIA
3	Cooper Kupp	LAR
4	Ja'Marr Chase	CIN
5	Stefon Diggs	BUF
6	CeeDee Lamb	DAL
7	Amon-Ra St. Brown	DET
8	Davante Adams	LV
9	A.J. Brown	PHI
10	DK Metcalf	SEA
11	Tee Higgins	CIN
12	Jaylen Waddle	MIA
13	Tyler Lockett	SEA
14	Garrett Wilson	NYJ
15	DeVonta Smith	PHI
16	Keenan Allen	LAC
17	Chris Olave	NO
18	Deebo Samuel	SF
19	Christian Kirk	JAC
20	Amari Cooper	CLE
21	Mike Williams	LAC
22	Christian Watson	GB
23	Jerry Jeudy	DEN
24	Treylon Burks	TEN
25	Terry McLaurin	WAS
26	Calvin Ridley	JAC
27	Michael Pittman Jr.	IND
28	DJ Moore	CHI
29	Chris Godwin	TB
30	Diontae Johnson	PIT
31	Gabe Davis	BUF
32	DeAndre Hopkins	ARI
33	Drake London	ATL
34	Mike Evans	TB
35	Allen Lazard	NYJ
36	Skyy Moore	KC
37	JuJu Smith-Schuster	NE
38	Kadarius Toney	KC
39	Zay Jones	JAC
40	Brandon Aiyuk	SF
41	Courtland Sutton	DEN
42	Adam Thielen	CAR
43	George Pickens	PIT
44	Marquise Brown	ARI
45	Nico Collins	HOU
46	Brandin Cooks	DAL
47	K.J. Osborn	MIN
48	Rashod Bateman	BAL
49	Jahan Dotson	WAS
50	Van Jefferson	LAR
51	Curtis Samuel	WAS
52	Jakobi Meyers	LV
53	Robert Woods	HOU
54	Jordan Addison	MIN

BRAD REMPEL-USA TODAY SPORTS

Rk	Player	Team
55	Tim Patrick	DEN
56	Tyler Boyd	CIN
57	Alec Pierce	IND
58	Michael Gallup	DAL
59	Isaiah Hodgins	NYG
60	Odell Beckham Jr.	BAL
61	Elijah Moore	CLE
62	Darnell Mooney	CHI
63	Donovan Peoples-Jones	CLE
64	Mecole Hardman Jr.	NYJ
65	Quentin Johnston	LAC
66	Jaxon Smith-Njigba	SEA
67	DJ Chark Jr.	CAR
68	Rondale Moore	ARI
69	Romeo Doubs	GB
70	Rashid Shaheed	NO
71	Michael Thomas	NO
72	Corey Davis	NYJ
73	Darius Slayton	NYG
74	Russell Gage Jr.	TB
75	Jayden Reed	GB
76	Hunter Renfrow	LV
77	Mack Hollins	ATL
78	Terrace Marshall Jr.	CAR
79	Khalil Shakir	BUF
80	Zay Flowers	BAL
81	DeVante Parker	NE
82	Marvin Jones Jr.	DET
83	Chase Claypool	CHI
84	Kendrick Bourne	NE
85	Tyquan Thornton	NE
86	Jameson Williams	DET
87	Marquez Valdes-Scantling	KC
88	John Metchie III	HOU
89	Nick Westbrook-Ikhine	TEN
90	Kyle Philips	TEN

TIGHT ENDS

Rk	Player	Team
1	Travis Kelce	KC
2	Mark Andrews	BAL
3	T.J. Hockenson	MIN
4	Kyle Pitts	ATL
5	Dallas Goedert	PHI
6	Pat Freiermuth	PIT
7	Darren Waller	NYG
8	George Kittle	SF
9	David Njoku	CLE
10	Evan Engram	JAC
11	Greg Dulcich	DEN
12	Chigoziem Okonkwo	TEN
13	Tyler Higbee	LAR
14	Juwan Johnson	NO
15	Hunter Henry	NE
16	Hayden Hurst	CAR
17	Taysom Hill	NO
18	Tyler Conklin	NYJ
19	Dalton Schultz	HOU
20	Irv Smith Jr.	CIN

Rk	Player	Team
21	Noah Fant	SEA
22	Dalton Kincaid	BUF
23	Jelani Woods	IND
24	Cole Kmet	CHI
25	Gerald Everett	LAC
26	Michael Mayer	LV
27	Mike Gesicki	NE
28	Cade Otton	TB
29	Trey McBride	ARI
30	Logan Thomas	WAS
31	Dawson Knox	BUF
32	Sam LaPorta	DET
33	Luke Musgrave	GB
34	Jake Ferguson	DAL
35	Zach Ertz	ARI
36	Will Dissly	SEA
37	Durham Smythe	MIA
38	Donald Parham Jr.	LAC
39	Isaiah Likely	BAL
40	Austin Hooper	LV

KICKERS

Rk	Player	Team
1	Daniel Carlson	LV
2	Justin Tucker	BAL
3	Greg Zuerlein	NYJ
4	Tyler Bass	BUF
5	Evan McPherson	CIN
6	Greg Joseph	MIN
7	Graham Gano	NYG
8	Harrison Butker	KC
9	Chad Ryland	NE
10	Jake Moody	SF
11	Younghoe Koo	ATL
12	Riley Patterson	JAC

Rk	Player	Team
13	Matt Gay	IND
14	Brandon McManus	DEN
15	Dustin Hopkins	LAC
16	Christopher Dunn	LAR
17	Michael Badgley	DET
18	Matt Prater	ARI
19	Tristan Vizcaino	DAL
20	Jason Sanders	MIA
21	Jake Elliott	PHI
22	Cade York	CLE
23	Eddy Piñeiro	CAR
24	Chris Boswell	PIT

DEFENSE/ST

Rk	Player
1	New England
2	Buffalo
3	Baltimore
4	Dallas
5	Philadelphia
6	Miami
7	Kansas City
8	San Francisco
9	Pittsburgh
10	Indianapolis
11	Jacksonville

Rk	Player
12	New Orleans
13	Washington
14	L.A. Chargers
15	N.Y. Giants
16	Cleveland
17	Tampa Bay
18	Green Bay
19	Detroit
20	Seattle
21	Tennessee
22	Carolina

Rk	Player
23	N.Y. Jets
24	Minnesota
25	Denver
26	Cincinnati
27	Houston
28	L.A. Rams
29	Arizona
30	Chicago
31	Atlanta
32	Las Vegas

TOP 280

FANTASY BIG BOARD

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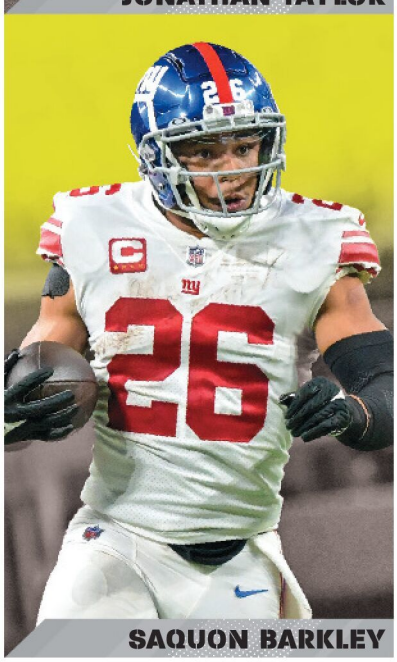
JONATHAN TAYLOR



SAQUON BARKLEY

Rk	Player	Pos	Team
1	Justin Jefferson	WR	MIN
2	Christian McCaffrey	RB	SF
3	Tyreek Hill	WR	MIA
4	Cooper Kupp	WR	LAR
5	Ja'Marr Chase	WR	CIN
6	Travis Kelce	TE	KC
7	Jonathan Taylor	RB	IND
8	Austin Ekeler	RB	LAC
9	Saquon Barkley	RB	NYG
10	Bijan Robinson	RB	ATL
11	Stefon Diggs	WR	BUF
12	CeeDee Lamb	WR	DAL
13	Amon-Ra St. Brown	WR	DET
14	Davante Adams	WR	LV
15	A.J. Brown	WR	PHI
16	Josh Jacobs	RB	LV
17	Tony Pollard	RB	DAL
18	Nick Chubb	RB	CLE
19	DK Metcalf	WR	SEA
20	Tee Higgins	WR	CIN
21	Joe Mixon	RB	CIN
22	Derrick Henry	RB	TEN
23	Rhamondre Stevenson	RB	NE
24	Mark Andrews	TE	BAL
25	Josh Allen	QB	BUF
26	Patrick Mahomes	QB	KC
27	Jalen Hurts	QB	PHI
28	Jaylen Waddle	WR	MIA
29	Tyler Lockett	WR	SEA
30	Garrett Wilson	WR	NYJ
31	DeVonta Smith	WR	PHI
32	Joe Burrow	QB	CIN
33	Justin Herbert	QB	LAC
34	Lamar Jackson	QB	BAL
35	Keenan Allen	WR	LAC
36	Chris Olave	WR	NO
37	Deebo Samuel	WR	SF
38	Jahmyr Gibbs	RB	DET
39	Najee Harris	RB	PIT
40	Travis Etienne Jr.	RB	JAC
41	Breece Hall	RB	NYJ
42	T.J. Hockenson	TE	MIN
43	Christian Kirk	WR	JAC
44	Amari Cooper	WR	CLE
45	Mike Williams	WR	LAC
46	Christian Watson	WR	GB
47	Jerry Jeudy	WR	DEN
48	Treylon Burks	WR	TEN
49	Terry McLaurin	WR	WAS
50	Calvin Ridley	WR	JAC
51	Michael Pittman Jr.	WR	IND
52	DJ Moore	WR	CHI
53	Chris Godwin	WR	TB
54	Trevor Lawrence	QB	JAC
55	Deshaun Watson	QB	CLE
56	Justin Fields	QB	CHI
57	Dalvin Cook	RB	MIN
58	James Conner	RB	ARI

Rk	Player	Pos	Team
59	J.K. Dobbins	RB	BAL
60	Kyle Pitts	TE	ATL
61	Dallas Goedert	TE	PHI
62	Miles Sanders	RB	CAR
63	Rachaad White	RB	TB
64	Aaron Jones	RB	GB
65	David Montgomery	RB	DET
66	Kenneth Walker III	RB	SEA
67	Cam Akers	RB	LAR
68	Diontae Johnson	WR	PIT
69	Gabe Davis	WR	BUF
70	DeAndre Hopkins	WR	ARI
71	Drake London	WR	ATL
72	Mike Evans	WR	TB
73	Pat Freiermuth	TE	PIT
74	Darren Waller	TE	NYG
75	George Kittle	TE	SF
76	Dak Prescott	QB	DAL
77	Isiah Pacheco	RB	KC
78	Dameon Pierce	RB	HOU
79	Javonte Williams	RB	DEN
80	David Njoku	TE	CLE
81	Evan Engram	TE	JAC
82	Allen Lazard	WR	NYJ
83	Skyy Moore	WR	KC
84	JuJu Smith-Schuster	WR	NE
85	Kadarius Toney	WR	KC
86	Zay Jones	WR	JAC
87	Brandon Aiyuk	WR	SF
88	Courtland Sutton	WR	DEN
89	Adam Thielen	WR	CAR
90	George Pickens	WR	PIT
91	Marquise Brown	WR	ARI
92	Damien Harris	RB	BUF
93	Brian Robinson Jr.	RB	WAS
94	AJ Dillon	RB	GB
95	Alvin Kamara	RB	NO
96	Greg Dulcich	TE	DEN
97	Chigoziem Okonkwo	TE	TEN
98	Geno Smith	QB	SEA
99	Kirk Cousins	QB	MIN
100	Tua Tagovailoa	QB	MIA
101	Aaron Rodgers	QB	NYJ
102	Jamaal Williams	RB	NO
103	D'Andre Swift	RB	PHI
104	Antonio Gibson	RB	WAS
105	Devon Achane	RB	MIA
106	Nico Collins	WR	HOU
107	Brandin Cooks	WR	DAL
108	K.J. Osborn	WR	MIN
109	Rashod Bateman	WR	BAL
110	Jahan Dotson	WR	WAS
111	Jared Goff	QB	DET
112	Daniel Jones	QB	NYG
113	Russell Wilson	QB	DEN
114	Devin Singletary	RB	HOU
115	Rashaad Penny	RB	PHI
116	Van Jefferson	WR	LAR

TAYLOR: TREVOR RUSZKOWSKI-USA TODAY SPORTS BARKLEY: JEFFREY BECKER-USA TODAY SPORTS

Rk	Player	Pos	Team
☐ 117	Curtis Samuel	WR	WAS
☐ 118	Jakobi Meyers	WR	LV
☐ 119	Robert Woods	WR	HOU
☐ 120	Jordan Addison	WR	MIN
☐ 121	New England	DST	
☐ 122	James Cook	RB	BUF
☐ 123	Jeff Wilson Jr.	RB	MIA
☐ 124	Samaje Perine	RB	DEN
☐ 125	Buffalo	DST	
☐ 126	Baltimore	DST	
☐ 127	Tim Patrick	WR	DEN
☐ 128	Tyler Boyd	WR	CIN
☐ 129	Alec Pierce	WR	IND
☐ 130	Michael Gallup	WR	DAL
☐ 131	Isaiah Hodgins	WR	NYG
☐ 132	Odell Beckham Jr.	WR	BAL
☐ 133	Elijah Moore	WR	CLE
☐ 134	Tyler Higbee	TE	LAR
☐ 135	Juwan Johnson	TE	NO
☐ 136	Hunter Henry	TE	NE
☐ 137	Jaylen Warren	RB	PIT
☐ 138	Tank Bigsby	RB	JAC
☐ 139	Zach Charbonnet	RB	SEA
☐ 140	Leonard Fournette	RB	FA
☐ 141	Darnell Mooney	WR	CHI
☐ 142	Donovan Peoples-Jones	WR	CLE
☐ 143	Mecole Hardman Jr.	WR	NYJ
☐ 144	Quentin Johnston	WR	LAC
☐ 145	Jaxon Smith-Njigba	WR	SEA
☐ 146	Hayden Hurst	TE	CAR
☐ 147	Taysom Hill	TE	NO
☐ 148	DJ Chark	WR	CAR
☐ 149	Rondale Moore	WR	ARI
☐ 150	Jerick McKinnon	RB	KC
☐ 151	Romeo Doubs	WR	GB
☐ 152	Rashid Shaheed	WR	NO
☐ 153	Michael Thomas	WR	NO
☐ 154	Tyjae Spears	RB	TEN
☐ 155	Michael Carter	RB	NYJ
☐ 156	Kyren Williams	RB	LAR
☐ 157	Ezekiel Elliott	RB	FA
☐ 158	Kenneth Gainwell	RB	PHI
☐ 159	Alexander Mattison	RB	MIN
☐ 160	Chuba Hubbard	RB	CAR
☐ 161	Elijah Mitchell	RB	SF
☐ 162	Roschon Johnson	RB	CHI
☐ 163	Khalil Herbert	RB	CHI
☐ 164	D'Onta Foreman	RB	CHI
☐ 165	Raheem Mostert	RB	MIA
☐ 166	Bryce Young	QB	CAR
☐ 167	Matthew Stafford	QB	LAR
☐ 168	Kenny Pickett	QB	PIT
☐ 169	Mac Jones	QB	NE
☐ 170	Jordan Love	QB	GB
☐ 171	Corey Davis	WR	NYJ

Rk	Player	Pos	Team
☐ 172	Darius Slayton	WR	NYG
☐ 173	Russell Gage	WR	TB
☐ 174	Jayden Reed	WR	GB
☐ 175	Dallas	DST	
☐ 176	Philadelphia	DST	
☐ 177	Miami	DST	
☐ 178	Kansas City	DST	
☐ 179	San Francisco	DST	
☐ 180	Pittsburgh	DST	
☐ 181	Cordarrelle Patterson	RB	ATL
☐ 182	Kareem Hunt	RB	FA
☐ 183	Tyler Allgeier	RB	ATL
☐ 184	Chase Edmonds	RB	TB
☐ 185	Kendre Miller	RB	NO
☐ 186	Hunter Renfrow	WR	LV
☐ 187	Mack Hollins	WR	ATL
☐ 188	Terrace Marshall Jr.	WR	CAR
☐ 189	Khalil Shakir	WR	BUF
☐ 190	Zay Flowers	WR	BAL
☐ 191	Indianapolis	DST	
☐ 192	Jacksonville	DST	
☐ 193	New Orleans	DST	
☐ 194	Jimmy Garoppolo	QB	LV
☐ 195	Derek Carr	QB	NO
☐ 196	Anthony Richardson	QB	IND
☐ 197	C.J. Stroud	QB	HOU
☐ 198	Ryan Tannehill	QB	TEN
☐ 199	Kyler Murray	QB	ARI
☐ 200	Tyler Conklin	TE	NYJ
☐ 201	Dalton Schultz	TE	HOU
☐ 202	Irv Smith Jr.	TE	CIN
☐ 203	Noah Fant	TE	SEA
☐ 204	Dalton Kincaid	TE	BUF
☐ 205	Jelani Woods	TE	IND
☐ 206	Cole Kmet	TE	CHI
☐ 207	Gerald Everett	TE	LAR
☐ 208	DeVante Parker	WR	NE
☐ 209	Marvin Jones Jr.	WR	DET
☐ 210	Chase Claypool	WR	CHI
☐ 211	Michael Mayer	TE	LV
☐ 212	Kendrick Bourne	WR	NE
☐ 213	Tyquan Thornton	WR	NE
☐ 214	Jameson Williams	WR	DET
☐ 215	Marquez Valdes-Scantling	WR	KC
☐ 216	John Metchie III	WR	HOU
☐ 217	Mike Gesicki	TE	NE
☐ 218	James Robinson	RB	NE
☐ 219	Joshua Kelley	RB	LAC
☐ 220	Gus Edwards	RB	BAL
☐ 221	Jerome Ford	RB	CLE
☐ 222	Travis Homer	RB	CHI
☐ 223	Chase Brown	RB	CIN
☐ 224	Pierre Strong Jr.	RB	NE
☐ 225	Zamir White	RB	LV
☐ 226	Zonovan Knight	RB	NYJ

Rk	Player	Pos	Team
☐ 227	Eric Gray	RB	NYG
☐ 228	Nick Westbrook-Ikhine	WR	TEN
☐ 229	Kyle Philips	WR	TEN
☐ 230	Deonte Harty	WR	BUF
☐ 231	Braxton Berrios	WR	MIA
☐ 232	Tutu Atwell	WR	LAR
☐ 233	Cade Otton	TE	TB
☐ 234	Trey McBride	TE	ARI
☐ 235	Logan Thomas	TE	WAS
☐ 236	Dawson Knox	TE	BUF
☐ 237	Deuce Vaughn	RB	DAL
☐ 238	Ameer Abdullah	RB	LV
☐ 239	Chris Evans	RB	CIN
☐ 240	Malik Davis	RB	DAL
☐ 241	Boston Scott	RB	PHI
☐ 242	Zack Moss	RB	IND
☐ 243	Allen Robinson II	WR	PIT
☐ 244	Wan'Dale Robinson	WR	NYG
☐ 245	Jalin Hyatt	WR	NYG
☐ 246	Rashee Rice	WR	KC
☐ 247	Marvin Mims Jr.	WR	DEN
☐ 248	Jonathan Mingo	WR	CAR
☐ 249	Joshua Palmer	WR	LAC
☐ 250	Isaiah Spiller	RB	LAC
☐ 251	Craig Reynolds	RB	DET
☐ 252	Clyde Edwards-Helaire	RB	KC
☐ 253	Zach Evans	RB	LAR
☐ 254	Sam LaPorta	TE	DET
☐ 255	Luke Musgrave	TE	GB
☐ 256	Jake Ferguson	TE	DAL
☐ 257	Zach Ertz	TE	ARI
☐ 258	Desmond Ridder	QB	ATL
☐ 259	Baker Mayfield	QB	TB
☐ 260	Brock Purdy	QB	SF
☐ 261	Sam Howell	QB	WAS
☐ 262	Jacoby Brissett	QB	WAS
☐ 263	Trey Lance	QB	SF
☐ 264	Gardner Minshew	QB	IND
☐ 265	Kyle Trask	QB	TB
☐ 266	Washington	DST	
☐ 267	Los Angeles Chargers	DST	
☐ 268	New York Giants	DST	
☐ 269	Daniel Carlson	K	LV
☐ 270	Justin Tucker	K	BAL
☐ 271	Greg Zuerlein	K	NYJ
☐ 272	Tyler Bass	K	BUF
☐ 273	Evan McPherson	K	CIN
☐ 274	Greg Joseph	K	MIN
☐ 275	Graham Gano	K	NYG
☐ 276	Harrison Butker	K	KC
☐ 277	Chad Ryland	K	NE
☐ 278	Jake Moody	K	SF
☐ 279	Younghoe Koo	K	ATL
☐ 280	Riley Patterson	K	JAC

TOP 240

FANTASY WITH IDPs

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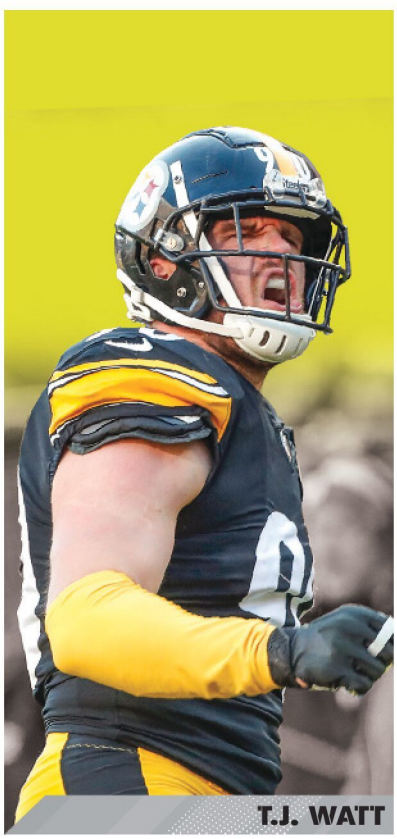
T.J. WATT

CHARLES LECLAIRE-USA TODAY SPORTS

	Rk	Player	Pos	Team
☐	1	Justin Jefferson	WR	MIN
☐	2	Christian McCaffrey	RB	SF
☐	3	Tyreek Hill	WR	MIA
☐	4	Cooper Kupp	WR	LAR
☐	5	Ja'Marr Chase	WR	CIN
☐	6	Travis Kelce	TE	KC
☐	7	Jonathan Taylor	RB	IND
☐	8	Austin Ekeler	RB	LAC
☐	9	Saquon Barkley	RB	NYG
☐	10	Bijan Robinson	RB	ATL
☐	11	Stefon Diggs	WR	BUF
☐	12	CeeDee Lamb	WR	DAL
☐	13	Amon-Ra St. Brown	WR	DET
☐	14	Davante Adams	WR	LV
☐	15	A.J. Brown	WR	PHI
☐	16	Josh Jacobs	RB	LV
☐	17	Tony Pollard	RB	DAL
☐	18	Nick Chubb	RB	CLE
☐	19	DK Metcalf	WR	SEA
☐	20	Tee Higgins	WR	CIN
☐	21	Joe Mixon	RB	CIN
☐	22	Derrick Henry	RB	TEN
☐	23	Rhamondre Stevenson	RB	NE
☐	24	Mark Andrews	TE	BAL
☐	25	Josh Allen	QB	BUF
☐	26	Patrick Mahomes	QB	KC
☐	27	Jalen Hurts	QB	PHI
☐	28	Jaylen Waddle	WR	MIA
☐	29	Tyler Lockett	WR	SEA
☐	30	Garrett Wilson	WR	NYJ
☐	31	DeVonta Smith	WR	PHI
☐	32	Joe Burrow	QB	CIN
☐	33	Justin Herbert	QB	LAC
☐	34	Lamar Jackson	QB	BAL
☐	35	Keenan Allen	WR	LAC
☐	36	Chris Olave	WR	NO
☐	37	Deebo Samuel	WR	SF
☐	38	Jahmyr Gibbs	RB	DET
☐	39	Najee Harris	RB	PIT
☐	40	Travis Etienne Jr.	RB	JAC
☐	41	Breece Hall	RB	NYJ
☐	42	T.J. Hockenson	TE	MIN
☐	43	Christian Kirk	WR	JAC
☐	44	Amari Cooper	WR	CLE
☐	45	Mike Williams	WR	LAC
☐	46	Christian Watson	WR	GB
☐	47	Jerry Jeudy	WR	DEN
☐	48	Treylon Burks	WR	TEN

	Rk	Player	Pos	Team
☐	49	Terry McLaurin	WR	WAS
☐	50	T.J. Watt	DE	PIT
☐	51	Calvin Ridley	WR	JAC
☐	52	Michael Pittman Jr.	WR	IND
☐	53	DJ Moore	WR	CHI
☐	54	Chris Godwin	WR	TB
☐	55	Trevor Lawrence	QB	JAC
☐	56	Deshaun Watson	QB	CLE
☐	57	Justin Fields	QB	CHI
☐	58	Dalvin Cook	RB	MIN
☐	59	James Conner	RB	ARI
☐	60	J.K. Dobbins	RB	BAL
☐	61	Kyle Pitts	TE	ATL
☐	62	Dallas Goedert	TE	PHI
☐	63	Miles Sanders	RB	CAR
☐	64	Rachaad White	RB	TB
☐	65	Aaron Jones	RB	GB
☐	66	David Montgomery	RB	DET
☐	67	Kenneth Walker III	RB	SEA
☐	68	Cam Akers	RB	LAR
☐	69	Diontae Johnson	WR	PIT
☐	70	Myles Garrett	DE	CLE
☐	71	Nick Bosa	DE	SF
☐	72	Maxx Crosby	DE	LV
☐	73	Nick Bolton	LB	KC
☐	74	Foyesade Oluokun	LB	JAC
☐	75	Roquan Smith	LB	BAL
☐	76	Gabe Davis	WR	BUF
☐	77	DeAndre Hopkins	WR	ARI
☐	78	Drake London	WR	ATL
☐	79	Mike Evans	WR	TB
☐	80	Pat Freiermuth	TE	PIT
☐	81	Darren Waller	TE	NYG
☐	82	George Kittle	TE	SF
☐	83	Dak Prescott	QB	DAL
☐	84	Isiah Pacheco	RB	KC
☐	85	Dameon Pierce	RB	HOU
☐	86	Javonte Williams	RB	DEN
☐	87	Joey Bosa	DE	LAC
☐	88	Haason Reddick	DE	PHI
☐	89	Bobby Wagner	LB	SEA
☐	90	Shaquille Leonard	LB	IND
☐	91	David Njoku	TE	CLE
☐	92	Evan Engram	TE	JAC
☐	93	Allen Lazard	WR	NYJ
☐	94	Skyy Moore	WR	KC
☐	95	JuJu Smith-Schuster	WR	NE
☐	96	Kadarius Toney	WR	KC

TOP 65 IDPs

RK	PLAYER	POS	TEAM
1	T.J. Watt	DE	PIT
2	Myles Garrett	DE	CLE
3	Nick Bosa	DE	SF
4	Maxx Crosby	DE	LV
5	Nick Bolton	LB	KC
6	Foyesade Oluokun	LB	JAC
7	Roquan Smith	LB	BAL
8	Joey Bosa	DE	LAC
9	Haason Reddick	DE	PHI
10	Bobby Wagner	LB	SEA
11	Shaquille Leonard	LB	IND
12	Kayvon Thibodeaux	DE	NYG
13	Matthew Judon	DE	NE
14	Derwin James Jr.	S	LAC
15	Bobby Okereke	LB	NYG
16	Josey Jewell	LB	DEN
17	C.J. Mosley	LB	NYJ
18	Eric Kendricks	LB	LAC
19	Quinnen Williams	DT	NYJ
20	Greg Rousseau	DE	BUF
21	Aaron Donald	DT	LAR
22	Aidan Hutchinson	DE	DET
23	Chris Jones	DT	KC
24	L'Jarius Sneed	CB	KC
25	Jalen Pitre	S	HOU
26	Minkah Fitzpatrick	S	PIT
27	Zaire Franklin	LB	IND
28	T.J. Edwards	LB	CHI
29	Logan Wilson	LB	CIN
30	Brian Burns	DE	CAR
31	Cameron Heyward	DE	PIT
32	DeForest Buckner	DT	IND
33	Jeffery Simmons	DT	TEN
34	Danielle Hunter	DE	MIN

Rk	Player	Pos	Team
97	Zay Jones	WR	JAC
98	Brandon Aiyuk	WR	SF
99	Courtland Sutton	WR	DEN
100	Adam Thielen	WR	CAR
101	George Pickens	WR	PIT
102	Marquise Brown	WR	ARI
103	Kayvon Thibodeaux	DE	NYG
104	Matthew Judon	DE	NE
105	Derwin James Jr.	S	LAC
106	Damien Harris	RB	BUF
107	Brian Robinson Jr.	RB	WAS
108	AJ Dillon	RB	GB
109	Alvin Kamara	RB	NO
110	Bobby Okereke	LB	NYG
111	Josey Jewell	LB	DEN
112	C.J. Mosley	LB	NYJ
113	Eric Kendricks	LB	LAC
114	Greg Dulcich	TE	DEN
115	Chigoziem Okonkwo	TE	TEN
116	Geno Smith	QB	SEA
117	Kirk Cousins	QB	MIN
118	Tua Tagovailoa	QB	MIA
119	Aaron Rodgers	QB	NYJ
120	Jamaal Williams	RB	NO
121	D'Andre Swift	RB	PHI
122	Antonio Gibson	RB	WAS
123	Devon Achane	RB	MIA
124	Quinnen Williams	DT	NYJ
125	Greg Rousseau	DE	BUF
126	Aaron Donald	DT	LAR
127	Aidan Hutchinson	DE	DET
128	Chris Jones	DT	KC
129	Nico Collins	WR	HOU
130	Brandin Cooks	WR	DAL
131	K.J. Osborn	WR	MIN
132	Rashod Bateman	WR	BAL
133	Jahan Dotson	WR	WAS
134	Jared Goff	QB	DET
135	Daniel Jones	QB	NYG
136	Russell Wilson	QB	DEN
137	L'Jarius Sneed	CB	KC
138	Jalen Pitre	S	HOU
139	Minkah Fitzpatrick	S	PIT
140	Devin Singletary	RB	HOU
141	Rashaad Penny	RB	PHI
142	Zaire Franklin	LB	IND
143	T.J. Edwards	LB	CHI
144	Logan Wilson	LB	CIN
145	Brian Burns	DE	CAR
146	Van Jefferson	WR	LAR
147	Curtis Samuel	WR	WAS
148	Jakobi Meyers	WR	LV
149	Cameron Heyward	DE	PIT
150	DeForest Buckner	DT	IND
151	Jeffery Simmons	DT	TEN
152	Danielle Hunter	DE	MIN
153	Robert Woods	WR	HOU
154	Jordan Addison	WR	MIN
155	James Cook	RB	BUF
156	Jeff Wilson Jr.	RB	MIA
157	Samaje Perine	RB	DEN
158	Tim Patrick	WR	DEN
159	Tyler Boyd	WR	CIN
160	Alec Pierce	WR	IND
161	Michael Gallup	WR	DAL
162	Isaiah Hodgins	WR	NYG
163	Odell Beckham Jr.	WR	BAL
164	Elijah Moore	WR	CLE
165	Justin Simmons	S	DEN
166	Jaquan Brisker	S	CHI
167	Jeremy Chinn	S	CAR
168	Tyler Higbee	TE	LAR
169	Juwan Johnson	TE	NO
170	Hunter Henry	TE	NE
171	Jaylen Warren	RB	PIT
172	Tank Bigsby	RB	JAC
173	Zach Charbonnet	RB	SEA
174	De'Vondre Campbell	LB	GB
175	Alex Singleton	LB	DEN
176	Cole Holcomb	LB	PIT
177	Fred Warner	LB	SF
178	Dre Greenlaw	LB	SF
179	Tremaine Edmunds	LB	CHI
180	Isaiah Simmons	LB	ARI
181	Leonard Fournette	RB	FA
182	Darnell Mooney	WR	CHI
183	Donovan Peoples-Jones	WR	CLE
184	Mecole Hardman Jr.	WR	NYJ
185	Quentin Johnston	WR	LAC
186	Jaxon Smith-Njigba	WR	SEA
187	Montez Sweat	DE	WAS
188	Kwity Paye	DE	IND
189	Hayden Hurst	TE	CAR
190	Taysom Hill	TE	NO
191	DJ Chark	WR	CAR
192	Rondale Moore	WR	ARI
193	Jerick McKinnon	RB	KC
194	Christian Wilkins	DT	MIA
195	Sam Hubbard	DE	CIN
196	Josh Allen	DE	JAC
197	Donovan Wilson	S	DAL
198	Romeo Doubs	WR	GB
199	Rashid Shaheed	WR	NO
200	Michael Thomas	WR	NO
201	Tyjae Spears	RB	TEN
202	Michael Carter	RB	NYJ
203	Kyren Williams	RB	LAR
204	Ezekiel Elliott	RB	FA
205	Kenneth Gainwell	RB	PHI
206	Alexander Mattison	RB	MIN
207	Chuba Hubbard	RB	CAR
208	Elijah Mitchell	RB	SF
209	Roschon Johnson	RB	CHI
210	Khalil Herbert	RB	CHI
211	D'Onta Foreman	RB	CHI
212	Raheem Mostert	RB	MIA
213	Bryce Young	QB	CAR
214	Matthew Stafford	QB	LAR
215	Kenny Pickett	QB	PIT
216	Mac Jones	QB	NE
217	Jordan Love	QB	GB
218	Cordarrelle Patterson	RB	ATL
219	Kareem Hunt	RB	FA
220	Tyler Allgeier	RB	ATL
221	Jimmy Garoppolo	QB	LV
222	Derek Carr	QB	NO
223	Anthony Richardson	QB	IND
224	C.J. Stroud	QB	HOU
225	Ryan Tannehill	QB	TEN
226	Kyler Murray	QB	ARI
227	Tyler Conklin	TE	NYJ
228	Dalton Schultz	TE	HOU
229	Daniel Carlson	K	LV
230	Justin Tucker	K	BAL
231	Greg Zuerlein	K	NYJ
232	Tyler Bass	K	BUF
233	Evan McPherson	K	CIN
234	Greg Joseph	K	MIN
235	Graham Gano	K	NYG
236	Harrison Butker	K	KC
237	Chad Ryland	K	NE
238	Jake Moody	K	SF
239	Younghoe Koo	K	ATL
240	Riley Patterson	K	JAC

RK	PLAYER	POS	TEAM
35	Justin Simmons	S	DEN
36	Jaquan Brisker	S	CHI
37	Jeremy Chinn	S	CAR
38	De'Vondre Campbell	LB	GB
39	Alex Singleton	LB	DEN
40	Cole Holcomb	LB	PIT
41	Fred Warner	LB	SF
42	Dre Greenlaw	LB	SF
43	Tremaine Edmunds	LB	CHI
44	Isaiah Simmons	LB	ARI
45	Montez Sweat	DE	WAS
46	Kwity Paye	DE	IND
47	Christian Wilkins	DT	MIA
48	Sam Hubbard	DE	CIN
49	Josh Allen	DE	JAC
50	Donovan Wilson	S	DAL
51	Talanoa Hufanga	S	SF
52	Antoine Winfield Jr.	S	TB
53	Matt Milano	LB	BUF
54	Jordan Hicks	LB	MIN
55	Devin White	LB	TB
56	Lavonte David	LB	TB
57	Micah Parsons	LB	DAL
58	Zaven Collins	LB	ARI
59	Devin Lloyd	LB	JAC
60	Rayshawn Jenkins	S	JAC
61	Harrison Smith	S	MIN
62	Grant Delpit	S	CLE
63	Jordan Poyer	S	BUF
64	Budda Baker	S	ARI
65	Pete Werner	LB	NO

QB RANKINGS

Rk	Player	Team	Bye
1	Josh Allen	BUF	13
2	Patrick Mahomes	KC	10
3	Jalen Hurts	PHI	10
4	Joe Burrow	CIN	7
5	Justin Herbert	LAC	5
6	Lamar Jackson	BAL	13
7	Trevor Lawrence	JAC	9
8	Deshaun Watson	CLE	5
9	Justin Fields	CHI	13
10	Dak Prescott	DAL	7
11	Geno Smith	SEA	5
12	Kirk Cousins	MIN	13
13	Tua Tagovailoa	MIA	10
14	Aaron Rodgers	NYJ	7
15	Jared Goff	DET	9
16	Daniel Jones	NYG	13
17	Russell Wilson	DEN	9
18	Bryce Young	CAR	7
19	Matthew Stafford	LAR	10
20	Kenny Pickett	PIT	6
21	Mac Jones	NE	11
22	Jordan Love	GB	6
23	Jimmy Garoppolo	LV	13
24	Derek Carr	NO	11
25	Anthony Richardson	IND	11
26	C.J. Stroud	HOU	7
27	Ryan Tannehill	TEN	7
28	Kyler Murray	ARI	14
29	Desmond Ridder	ATL	11
30	Baker Mayfield	TB	5
31	Brock Purdy	SF	9
32	Sam Howell	WAS	14
33	Jacoby Brissett	WAS	14
34	Trey Lance	SF	9
35	Gardner Minshew	IND	11
36	Kyle Trask	TB	5
37	Colt McCoy	ARI	14
38	Taylor Heinicke	ATL	11
39	Mike White	MIA	10
40	Tyler Huntley	BAL	13

AVERAGE DEPTH OF THROW

ADOT tracks the distance downfield each pass travels before it is complete, incomplete or intercepted. Quarterbacks with high ADOT marks generally take more chances, which will lead to more coveted big plays. Shown here are the top 40 ADOT marks among QBs who dropped back to pass at least 100 times during the 2022 season.

Player	Team	DB	ADOT
Jameis Winston	NO	129	12.0
Marcus Mariota	ATL	354	10.5
Jarrett Stidham	LV	101	10.3
Josh Allen	BUF	754	10.2
Tua Tagovailoa	MIA	432	10.1
Mitchell Trubisky	PIT	195	10.0
Zach Wilson	NYJ	279	9.7
Derek Carr	LV	544	9.7
Justin Fields	CHI	444	9.5
Jacoby Brissett	CLE	416	9.5
Russell Wilson	DEN	569	9.5
Sam Darnold	CAR	162	9.2
Taylor Heinicke	WAS	292	9.2
Lamar Jackson	BAL	378	9.2
Skylar Thompson	MIA	167	9.0
Cooper Rush	DAL	172	8.9
Jalen Hurts	PHI	637	8.7
Dak Prescott	DAL	507	8.6
Aaron Rodgers	GB	588	8.5
PJ Walker	CAR	119	8.4
Desmond Ridder	ATL	136	8.4
Joe Flacco	NYJ	202	8.4
Andy Dalton	NO	415	8.4
Davis Mills	HOU	529	8.4
Geno Smith	SEA	693	8.3
Ryan Tannehill	TEN	374	8.2
Mac Jones	NE	496	8.2
Mike White	NYJ	186	8.0
Kenny Pickett	PIT	444	8.0
Deshaun Watson	CLE	204	7.9
Carson Wentz	WAS	314	7.9
Trevor Lawrence	JAC	733	7.9
Kirk Cousins	MIN	740	7.9
Sam Ehlinger	IND	125	7.8
Brock Purdy	SF	259	7.8
Jared Goff	DET	626	7.6
Joe Burrow	CIN	803	7.6
Patrick Mahomes	KC	835	7.5
Tyler Huntley	BAL	168	7.4
Jimmy Garoppolo	SF	328	7.3
Tom Brady	TB	829	7.3

(MIN 100 DROPBACKS, INCLUDING PLAYOFFS) SOURCE: PRO FOOTBALL FOCUS

INJURY CONCERNS

LAMAR JACKSON, BALTIMORE RAVENS

Jackson has missed five games in each of the past two seasons, with a sprained ankle in 2021 and a sprained knee in 2022. Given his reliance on mobility, recurring leg injuries are a major concern.

TUA TAGOVAILOA, MIAMI DOLPHINS

The Dolphins picked up Tagovailoa's fifth-year option during the offseason, reinforcing their commitment to him despite the concussion concerns that were magnified in 2022. He missed four games under concussion protocol.

DANIEL JONES, NEW YORK GIANTS

Jones helped the Giants reach the playoffs and was rewarded in the offseason with a lucrative new four-year, $160 million contract. Of course, any quarterback who runs that much is an injury concern.

MATTHEW STAFFORD, LOS ANGELES RAMS

Stafford was a major injury concern for all of 2022. Elbow issues limited his offseason work, but it was a combination of other injuries (concussions, neck) that ended his season after just nine games. Rams head coach Sean McVay said Stafford was cleared to play in April, but the issues are worth monitoring.

RYAN TANNEHILL, TENNESSEE TITANS

Tannehill began showing signs of wear in '22. He missed Weeks 8 and 9 with an ankle injury and then missed the final three games after re-aggravating the injury. Tannehill turns 35 in July, and the Titans are already thinking about their QB of the future.

KYLER MURRAY, ARIZONA CARDINALS

Murray tore the ACL in his right knee in Week 14 last season and underwent surgery in early January. There have been reports that Murray does not want to rush things.

MAC JONES, NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

Jones has been relatively durable, but his lack of production has created a tenuous situation. Jones can't afford to miss time with injuries; there are already calls for Bailey Zappe to get a chance to start.

JIMMY GAROPPOLO, LAS VEGAS RAIDERS

Garoppolo's up-and-down career with the 49ers unofficially ended in Week 13 last season when he broke his left foot. Garoppolo had entered '22 following shoulder surgery, but his performance indicated that that injury was behind him.

BROCK PURDY, SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

Purdy tore his UCL in the NFC Championship Game and had surgery in March. It's no guarantee that he'll be ready to start the season, and he'll have a tough time getting back on the field if he's not 100 percent.

TREY LANCE, SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

The season-ending injuries that Lance suffered in Week 2 — a fractured fibula and ligament damage in his ankle — opened the door for two other 49ers QBs. Brock Purdy will compete with Lance for the starting job when he recovers from his own injury.

RB RANKINGS

Rk	Player	Team	Bye
1	Christian McCaffrey	SF	9
2	Jonathan Taylor	IND	11
3	Austin Ekeler	LAC	5
4	Saquon Barkley	NYG	13
5	Bijan Robinson	ATL	11
6	Josh Jacobs	LV	13
7	Tony Pollard	DAL	7
8	Nick Chubb	CLE	5
9	Joe Mixon	CIN	7
10	Derrick Henry	TEN	7
11	Rhamondre Stevenson	NE	11
12	Jahmyr Gibbs	DET	9
13	Najee Harris	PIT	6
14	Travis Etienne Jr.	JAC	9
15	Breece Hall	NYJ	7
16	Dalvin Cook	MIN	13
17	James Conner	ARI	14
18	J.K. Dobbins	BAL	13
19	Miles Sanders	CAR	7
20	Rachaad White	TB	5
21	Aaron Jones	GB	6
22	David Montgomery	DET	9
23	Kenneth Walker III	SEA	5
24	Cam Akers	LAR	10
25	Isiah Pacheco	KC	10
26	Dameon Pierce	HOU	7
27	Javonte Williams	DEN	9
28	Damien Harris	BUF	13
29	Brian Robinson Jr.	WAS	14
30	AJ Dillon	GB	6
31	Alvin Kamara	NO	11
32	Jamaal Williams	NO	11
33	D'Andre Swift	PHI	10
34	Antonio Gibson	WAS	14
35	Devon Achane	MIA	10
36	Devin Singletary	HOU	7
37	Rashaad Penny	PHI	10
38	James Cook	BUF	13
39	Jeff Wilson Jr.	MIA	10
40	Samaje Perine	DEN	9
41	Jaylen Warren	PIT	6
42	Tank Bigsby	JAC	9
43	Zach Charbonnet	SEA	5
44	Leonard Fournette	FA	
45	Jerick McKinnon	KC	10
46	Tyjae Spears	TEN	7
47	Michael Carter	NYJ	7
48	Kyren Williams	LAR	10
49	Ezekiel Elliott	FA	
50	Kenneth Gainwell	PHI	10
51	Alexander Mattison	MIN	13
52	Chuba Hubbard	CAR	7
53	Elijah Mitchell	SF	9
54	Roschon Johnson	CHI	13
55	Khalil Herbert	CHI	13
56	D'Onta Foreman	CHI	13
57	Raheem Mostert	MIA	10
58	Cordarrelle Patterson	ATL	11
59	Kareem Hunt	FA	
60	Tyler Allgeier	ATL	11
61	Chase Edmonds	TB	5
62	Kendre Miller	NO	11
63	James Robinson	NE	11
64	Joshua Kelley	LAC	5
65	Gus Edwards	BAL	13
66	Jerome Ford	CLE	5
67	Travis Homer	CHI	13
68	Chase Brown	CIN	7
69	Pierre Strong Jr.	NE	11
70	Zamir White	LV	13

WORKLOAD WATCH

Touch/Game, 3-Yr	TCH	TPG	GP
1 Derrick Henry	1,016	25.4	40
2 Josh Jacobs	970	20.6	47
3 Dalvin Cook	942	21.4	44
4 Jonathan Taylor	860	20.0	43
5 Alvin Kamara	837	19.5	43
6 Ezekiel Elliott	828	17.6	47
7 David Montgomery	803	18.3	44
8 Nick Chubb	783	18.2	43
9 Austin Ekeler	757	17.6	43
10 Joe Mixon	744	20.7	36
11 Aaron Jones	743	16.2	46
12 Antonio Gibson	701	15.6	45

Touch/Game, 2-Yr	TCH	TPG	GP
1 Josh Jacobs	664	20.8	32
2 Derrick Henry	619	25.8	24
3 Joe Mixon	604	20.1	30
4 Jonathan Taylor	592	21.1	28
5 Austin Ekeler	587	17.8	33
6 Dalvin Cook	586	19.5	30
7 Nick Chubb	577	18.6	31
8 Alvin Kamara	567	20.3	28
9 Saquon Barkley	555	19.1	29
10 Ezekiel Elliott	532	16.6	32
11 Leonard Fournette	511	17.0	30
12 David Montgomery	502	17.3	29

INJURY CONCERNS

CHRISTIAN MCCAFFREY, SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

McCaffrey stayed healthy in '22 and put up 1,880 scrimmage yards and 13 touchdowns (throwing for another). That said, we're still talking about a player who has missed 23 games in his past three seasons.

JONATHAN TAYLOR, INDIANAPOLIS COLTS

Last season's consensus No. 1 pick in fantasy injured his ankle in Week 4 and missed the next two games. He reinjured the ankle in Week 15, sat out the rest of the season and had arthroscopic surgery in January. Taylor is expected to be healthy to start the season.

JOE MIXON, CINCINNATI BENGALS

Mixon took a step back last season. In addition to missing two games due to a concussion, he was very inconsistent. He scored nine total touchdowns, but five came in one game.

DERRICK HENRY, TENNESSEE TITANS

Henry played 16 games last season, rushing for 1,538 yards and 13 TDs. But it was also his third season in the past four with 300-plus carries, and he's 29.

J.K. DOBBINS, BALTIMORE RAVENS

Dobbins not only missed all of 2021 with a torn ACL but also was brought back very slowly in '22 and lacked the explosiveness he showed as a rookie. He did finish the season stronger than he started it.

BREECE HALL, NEW YORK JETS

Hall had the third-most fantasy points among RBs in Weeks 5-6. A week later, however, he tore his ACL and was lost for the season. The Jets do expect him to be ready for the start of the season. He's a valuable weapon, provided he's back at 100 percent.

JAVONTE WILLIAMS, DENVER BRONCOS

There were great expectations for Williams in 2022. Alas, he suffered a major knee injury (he tore the ACL and MCL in his right knee and damaged other ligaments) early in the season. Even if he is ready for the start of the season, the severity of the injury means it might take him a while to return to form.

DAMIEN HARRIS, BUFFALO BILLS

Harris missed six games due to injury last season, but the Patriots' decision to not re-sign him had more to do with the emergence of Rhamondre Stevenson. He may not get as many goal-line opportunities, but a healthy Harris should be productive.

RASHAAD PENNY, PHILADELPHIA EAGLES

Penny was Seattle's No. 1 running back following a solid end to the 2021 season, and he got off to a good start. Then he broke his fibula in Week 5, and his season was over. He'll get a fresh start in Philadelphia, where he'll run behind a much better line.

ELIJAH MITCHELL, SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

Mitchell sprained his MCL in Week 1 — which led the team to trade for Christian McCaffrey. When Mitchell returned late in the season, it was clear that the 49ers planned to keep him busy despite McCaffrey's presence. Mitchell will get touches if healthy.

WR RANKINGS

Rk	Player	Team	Bye
1	Justin Jefferson	MIN	13
2	Tyreek Hill	MIA	10
3	Cooper Kupp	LAR	10
4	Ja'Marr Chase	CIN	7
5	Stefon Diggs	BUF	13
6	CeeDee Lamb	DAL	7
7	Amon-Ra St. Brown	DET	9
8	Davante Adams	LV	13
9	A.J. Brown	PHI	10
10	DK Metcalf	SEA	5
11	Tee Higgins	CIN	7
12	Jaylen Waddle	MIA	10
13	Tyler Lockett	SEA	5
14	Garrett Wilson	NYJ	7
15	DeVonta Smith	PHI	10
16	Keenan Allen	LAC	5
17	Chris Olave	NO	11
18	Deebo Samuel	SF	9
19	Christian Kirk	JAC	9
20	Amari Cooper	CLE	5
21	Mike Williams	LAC	5
22	Christian Watson	GB	6
23	Jerry Jeudy	DEN	9
24	Treylon Burks	TEN	7
25	Terry McLaurin	WAS	14
26	Calvin Ridley	JAC	9
27	Michael Pittman Jr.	IND	11
28	DJ Moore	CHI	13
29	Chris Godwin	TB	5
30	Diontae Johnson	PIT	6
31	Gabe Davis	BUF	13
32	DeAndre Hopkins	ARI	14
33	Drake London	ATL	11
34	Mike Evans	TB	5
35	Allen Lazard	NYJ	7
36	Skyy Moore	KC	10
37	JuJu Smith-Schuster	NE	11
38	Kadarius Toney	KC	10
39	Zay Jones	JAC	9
40	Brandon Aiyuk	SF	9
41	Courtland Sutton	DEN	9
42	Adam Thielen	CAR	7
43	George Pickens	PIT	6
44	Marquise Brown	ARI	14
45	Nico Collins	HOU	7
46	Brandin Cooks	DAL	7
47	K.J. Osborn	MIN	13
48	Rashod Bateman	BAL	13
49	Jahan Dotson	WAS	14
50	Van Jefferson	LAR	10
51	Curtis Samuel	WAS	14
52	Jakobi Meyers	LV	13
53	Robert Woods	HOU	7
54	Jordan Addison	MIN	13
55	Tim Patrick	DEN	9
56	Tyler Boyd	CIN	7
57	Alec Pierce	IND	11
58	Michael Gallup	DAL	7
59	Isaiah Hodgins	NYG	13
60	Odell Beckham Jr.	BAL	13
61	Elijah Moore	CLE	5
62	Darnell Mooney	CHI	13
63	Donovan Peoples-Jones	CLE	5
64	Mecole Hardman Jr.	NYJ	7

AVERAGE DEPTH OF TARGET

TOP WRs			
Player	**Team**	**Targets**	**ADOT**
DeVante Parker	NE	47	16.8
Gabriel Davis	BUF	106	16.8
Van Jefferson	LAR	44	16.6
DJ Chark Jr.	DET	51	15.9
George Pickens	PIT	84	15.6
Jahan Dotson	WAS	56	15.4
M. Valdes-Scantling	KC	87	15.1
Tyquan Thornton	NE	43	14.9
Chris Olave	NO	114	14.9
Chosen Anderson	CAR/ARI	43	14.6

BOTTOM WRs			
Player	**Team**	**Targets**	**ADOT**
Greg Dortch	ARI	64	4.6
Deebo Samuel	SF	106	5.1
Rondale Moore	ARI	55	5.2
Chris Godwin	TB	150	5.7
Russell Gage Jr.	TB	78	5.9
Parris Campbell	IND	85	6.5
Hunter Renfrow	LV	49	6.5
Richie James Jr.	NYG	82	6.6
Amon-Ra St. Brown	DET	139	6.7
Curtis Samuel	WAS	87	6.9

(MIN 40 TARGETS, INCLUDING PLAYOFFS) SOURCE: PRO FOOTBALL FOCUS

INJURY CONCERNS

COOPER KUPP, LOS ANGELES RAMS
Kupp suffered an ankle injury in Week 10 that ended his season and ultimately required surgery. Rams trainers seem pleased with the 2021 receiving triple crown winner's progress.

KEENAN ALLEN, LOS ANGELES CHARGERS
The 31-year-old Allen missed seven games with a hamstring injury from which he never seemed to fully recover. It was the least productive season of his 10-year career outside of a 2016 campaign in which he played only one game due to injury.

DEEBO SAMUEL, SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS
Hamstring and ankle injuries that forced Samuel to miss four games and parts of others. With Christian McCaffrey there to handle the bulk of the 49ers' rushing work, Samuel can focus more on receiving and not get beaten up as much on handoffs.

MIKE WILLIAMS, LOS ANGELES CHARGERS
While Williams missed only four regular-season games with a bad ankle, he was less than 100 percent for much of the season. Then in the season finale, Williams suffered a back injury. He is expected to be 100 percent healthy for the start of the season.

KADARIUS TONEY, KANSAS CITY CHIEFS
The Giants unloaded Toney to Kansas City last season because he couldn't stay healthy, and all he did was score a TD in the Super Bowl. Still, Toney has missed 15 games through two NFL seasons.

RASHOD BATEMAN, BALTIMORE RAVENS
A foot injury cut Bateman's 2022 season short after six games. Plus, free-agent signing Odell Beckham Jr. and rookie first-round pick Zay Flowers also will be competing for targets.

TIM PATRICK, DENVER BRONCOS
Patrick averaged 52 catches for 738 yards in 2020-21, but he never got to develop a rapport with new QB Russell Wilson due to a torn ACL last August that cost him the season. There should be room for Patrick to contribute in Sean Payton's passing attack.

STERLING SHEPARD, NEW YORK GIANTS
Shepard has played in only 10 games over the past two seasons. Still, despite an Achilles injury in 2021 and a torn ACL in '22, the Giants signed the 30-year-old to a one-year extension for this season.

JAMESON WILLIAMS, DETROIT LIONS
Williams missed most of his rookie season because of the torn ACL he suffered in the 2021 national championship game. The Lions will now have to wait again; Williams was suspended for the first six games for violating the NFL's gambling policy.

MICHAEL THOMAS, NEW ORLEANS SAINTS
Thomas had one of the best fantasy seasons ever in 2019. But then he missed nine games in '20 and was out all of '21 with an ankle injury. Fantasy managers were hoping for a return to form in '22, but Thomas was limited to three games. He turned 30 in March.

TE RANKINGS

Rk	Player	Team	Bye
1	Travis Kelce	KC	10
2	Mark Andrews	BAL	13
3	T.J. Hockenson	MIN	13
4	Kyle Pitts	ATL	11
5	Dallas Goedert	PHI	10
6	Pat Freiermuth	PIT	6
7	Darren Waller	NYG	13
8	George Kittle	SF	9
9	David Njoku	CLE	5
10	Evan Engram	JAC	9
11	Greg Dulcich	DEN	9
12	Chigoziem Okonkwo	TEN	7
13	Tyler Higbee	LAR	10
14	Juwan Johnson	NO	11
15	Hunter Henry	NE	11
16	Hayden Hurst	CAR	7
17	Taysom Hill	NO	11
18	Tyler Conklin	NYJ	7
19	Dalton Schultz	HOU	7
20	Irv Smith Jr.	CIN	7
21	Noah Fant	SEA	5
22	Dalton Kincaid	BUF	13
23	Jelani Woods	IND	11
24	Cole Kmet	CHI	13
25	Gerald Everett	LAC	5
26	Michael Mayer	LV	13
27	Mike Gesicki	NE	11
28	Cade Otton	TB	5
29	Trey McBride	ARI	14
30	Logan Thomas	WAS	14
31	Dawson Knox	BUF	13
32	Sam LaPorta	DET	9
33	Luke Musgrave	GB	6
34	Jake Ferguson	DAL	7
35	Zach Ertz	ARI	14
36	Will Dissly	SEA	5
37	Durham Smythe	MIA	10
38	Donald Parham Jr.	LAC	5
39	Isaiah Likely	BAL	13
40	Austin Hooper	LV	13

AVERAGE DEPTH OF TARGET

Player	Team	Targets	ADOT
Darren Waller	LV	42	14.0
Kyle Pitts	ATL	56	13.7
Greg Dulcich	DEN	51	12.7
Mike Gesicki	MIA	56	10.8
Mark Andrews	BAL	119	10.2
Juwan Johnson	NO	61	9.8
Jordan Akins	HOU	49	8.5
Austin Hooper	TEN	56	8.5
Dawson Knox	BUF	77	8.4
Pat Freiermuth	PIT	96	8.4
Cole Kmet	CHI	69	8.2
Foster Moreau	LV	49	8.1
Chig Okonkwo	TEN	45	8.0
Zach Ertz	ARI	66	8.0
George Kittle	SF	90	8.0
Dalton Schultz	DAL	104	8.0
Hunter Henry	NE	57	7.9
Tyler Conklin	NYJ	83	7.9
David Njoku	CLE	79	7.8
T.J. Hockenson	DET/MIN	133	7.8
Travis Kelce	KC	182	7.5
Isaiah Likely	BAL	56	7.4
Logan Thomas	WAS	57	7.0
Noah Fant	SEA	65	6.9
Evan Engram	JAC	114	6.1
Harrison Bryant	CLE	42	6.0
Robert Tonyan	GB	63	6.0
Cade Otton	TB	69	6.0
Gerald Everett	LAC	89	6.0
Dallas Goedert	PHI	85	5.9

(MIN 30 TARGETS, INCLUDING PLAYOFFS)

For wide receivers and tight ends, ADOT removes volatile YAC (yards after catch) from the equation, instead focusing only on the average distance the player is downfield on each target. It's an indicator of big-play potential.

INJURY CONCERNS

KYLE PITTS, ATLANTA FALCONS

Bouncing back from his season-ending Week 10 knee injury will be secondary to Pitts getting reps with new starting QB Desmond Ridder. Pitts was typically the third TE off the boards last summer; he's dropped two or three spots since then.

DALLAS GOEDERT, PHILADELPHIA EAGLES

Goedert suffered a shoulder injury the exact same week that Zach Ertz was injured. Goedert missed five weeks, but he did make it back before the end of the season, scoring a touchdown in the playoffs and then catching six passes for 60 yards in Super Bowl LVII.

DARREN WALLER, NEW YORK GIANTS

The Giants would like to get the player Waller was in 2020, when he caught 107 passes for 1,196 yards and nine TDs for the Raiders. The past two seasons, however, have been marred by injuries. Waller missed eight games last season with a lingering hamstring injury.

GEORGE KITTLE, SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

Kittle hasn't played a full season since his career year of 2018, when he caught 88 passes for 1,377 yards and five scores. He missed the first two games last season with a groin injury.

HAYDEN HURST, CAROLINA PANTHERS

Hurst will be playing for his third team in the past three seasons. He missed four games each of the past two seasons, suffering an ankle injury with Atlanta in 2021 and a calf injury with Cincinnati last season.

IRV SMITH JR., CINCINNATI BENGALS

Smith had only 25 receptions through Week 8 last season when an ankle injury put him on injured reserve. He came back for the postseason and caught a 3-yard touchdown pass in the playoff loss to the Giants, but the Vikings chose not to re-sign him.

LOGAN THOMAS, WASHINGTON COMMANDERS

Thomas will turn 32 before this season, and perhaps his age is one reason why he was slow to come back from an ACL tear suffered late in 2021. Thomas had a breakout season in 2020, but he missed time in '21 with a hamstring injury and then the ACL tear.

ZACH ERTZ, ARIZONA CARDINALS

Last season was cut short when Ertz tore his ACL and MCL in Week 10. Ertz, who turns 33 in November, will be especially important for the Cardinals, since starting QB Kyler Murray likely won't be ready until closer to midseason.

ROBERT TONYAN, CHICAGO BEARS

The Bears are hoping Tonyan can replicate his breakout season of 2020, when he caught 11 touchdown passes for the Packers. Tonyan tore his ACL a season later and missed nine games.

ALBERT OKWUEGBUNAM, DENVER BRONCOS

Okwuegbunam could get a good look in new head coach Sean Payton's offense, but keep in mind that his injury history includes a torn ACL as a rookie in 2020 and dealing with a hamstring issue in '21.

▲ GOING UP

PITTSBURGH STEELERS

After they had finished in the top half of D/STs for seven straight seasons, a bit of bad luck contributed to Steelers' drop into a tie for 18th in 2022. But with some regression to the mean and a strong offseason, the Steelers should be back to a reliable starting option. For one, only the Jets had worse luck recovering opposing fumbles, as the Steelers came up with a measly 21.4 percent of loose balls. Plus, Pittsburgh will be going from the league's second-hardest schedule to the 11th easiest, based on preseason projected win totals. Adding Patrick Peterson and second-rounders Joey Porter Jr. and Keeanu Benton should boost this unit as well.

INDIANAPOLIS COLTS

It's easy to forget that the Colts had the No. 4 D/ST by ADP going into last season. It's also easy to see a big bounce-back campaign in 2023. Much of their top talent remains, and they added some intriguing pieces in the draft, including cornerback JuJu Brents and lineman Adetomiwa Adebawore. Indy should also give up fewer points if only because opponents are unlikely to hit 92.9 percent of their field goals again (sixth highest), and the Colts' strength of schedule drops to fourth easiest this season. Their fantasy playoff schedule: Pittsburgh, Atlanta, Las Vegas.

JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS

The Jaguars' talented defensive front didn't produce many sacks last season, but that's likely to change. Considering they ranked fourth in pressure rate (25.1 percent) and fifth in hurry rate (8.4 percent), it's easy to see them taking a big step forward in that department as Travon Walker enters his second season and Josh Allen enters a walk year. Plus, it's almost impossible for other teams to be so successful on field goals again; opponents connected on 93.9 percent of kicks, second highest in the NFL.

CLEVELAND BROWNS

The Browns should improve on the No. 18 ranking from last season. With some basic turnover luck, Cleveland could easily add to its points total. Last season, the Browns recovered only 34.6 percent of opponents fumbles, fifth lowest in the league. That's likely to return closer to league average, especially with big free-agent additions in tackle Dalvin Tomlinson, safety Juan Thornhill and end Ogbonnia Okoronkwo, who earned a combined $97 million in guarantees. The fantasy playoff schedule — Chicago, Houston, the Jets — is especially soft.

D/ST RANKINGS

Rk	Team	Bye
1	New England	11
2	Buffalo	13
3	Baltimore	13
4	Dallas	7
5	Philadelphia	10
6	Miami	10
7	Kansas City	10
8	San Francisco	9
9	Pittsburgh	6
10	Indianapolis	11
11	Jacksonville	9
12	New Orleans	11
13	Washington	14
14	Los Angeles Chargers	5
15	New York Giants	13
16	Cleveland	5
17	Tampa Bay	5
18	Green Bay	6
19	Detroit	9
20	Seattle	5
21	Tennessee	7
22	Carolina	7
23	New York Jets	7
24	Minnesota	13
25	Denver	9
26	Cincinnati	7
27	Houston	7
28	Los Angeles Rams	10
29	Arizona	14
30	Chicago	13
31	Atlanta	11
32	Las Vegas	13

▼ GOING DOWN

BUFFALO BILLS

The Bills ranked second in scoring defense in part because opponents hit only 78.8 percent of their field goals, the fifth-lowest rate in the NFL. Expect that to return closer to the league average of 85 percent. Adding Poona Ford in free agency was nice, but it won't totally make up for the loss of budding star Tremaine Edmunds. Plus, they'll face the second-hardest schedule in the league; their fantasy schedule consists of Dallas, the Chargers and New England.

KANSAS CITY CHIEFS

After sitting 15th in ADP, the Chiefs D/ST came in eighth in 2022. But there's plenty of reason to believe they may finish in the middle of the pack this year. Their 57.8 recovery rate on opponents' fumbles was third highest in the NFL and unsustainable. Also, another first-place schedule gives them the third-hardest SOS. With the number of high-scoring games the Chiefs are likely to play, you have to bank on another high-sack or high-turnover year.

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

Despite finishing with only seven picks (30th in the NFL), the Saints stayed fantasy relevant with 48 sacks (T-5). But that production is not sustainable, based on their 17.5 percent pressure rate and 4.8 percent hurry rate (both 29th). After some key departures, this unit is likely to take a step back unless the rookie class immediately steps up.

WASHINGTON COMMANDERS

The Commanders' talented front seven has not lived up to expectations. There's certainly potential to improve, but some luck helped prop up this unit last year; they recovered 52.9 percent of their opponents' fumbles, seventh best in the league. Their strength of schedule also jumps from fifth easiest to sixth hardest.

PAUL RUTHERFORD-USA TODAY SPORTS

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AFC

AFC PLAYOFF SEEDS

1. Kansas City Chiefs
2. Cincinnati Bengals
3. Jacksonville Jaguars
4. Miami Dolphins
5. Baltimore Ravens
6. Buffalo Bills
7. New York Jets

WILD CARD WEEKEND

(2) Bengals over (7) Jets

(6) Bills over (3) Jaguars

(4) Dolphins over (5) Ravens

DIVISIONAL ROUND

(1) Chiefs over (6) Bills

(2) Bengals over (4) Dolphins

CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

(1) Chiefs over (2) Bengals

SUPER BOWL LVIII

(1) Chiefs over (2) Seahawks

PREDICTIONS

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH FOR THE FOUR DIVISIONS

AFC EAST

1. Miami DOLPHINS
2. Buffalo BILLS
3. New York JETS
4. New England PATRIOTS

AFC NORTH

1. Cincinnati BENGALS
2. Baltimore RAVENS
3. Pittsburgh STEELERS
4. Cleveland BROWNS

AFC SOUTH

1. Jacksonville JAGUARS
2. Tennessee TITANS
3. Houston TEXANS
4. Indianapolis COLTS

AFC WEST

1. Kansas City CHIEFS
2. Los Angeles CHARGERS
3. Denver BRONCOS
4. Las Vegas RAIDERS

AFC POWER RANKINGS

1. Kansas City Chiefs
2. Cincinnati Bengals
3. Miami Dolphins
4. Buffalo Bills
5. Jacksonville Jaguars
6. Baltimore Ravens
7. New York Jets
8. Los Angeles Chargers
9. Pittsburgh Steelers
10. Cleveland Browns
11. New England Patriots
12. Denver Broncos
13. Tennessee Titans
14. Las Vegas Raiders
15. Houston Texans
16. Indianapolis Colts

SUPERLATIVES

Offensive POY
PATRICK MAHOMES, QB, CHIEFS

Defensive POY
T.J. WATT, OLB, STEELERS

Comeback POY
CALVIN RIDLEY, WR, JAGUARS

Offensive ROY
DALTON KINCAID, TE, BILLS

Defensive ROY
WILL ANDERSON JR., OLB, TEXANS

Coach of the Year
MIKE MCDANIEL, DOLPHINS

AFC COACHING CAROUSEL

HEAD COACHES

DENVER BRONCOS

Old: Nathaniel Hackett | New: Sean Payton

The marquee head-coaching hire of the offseason, Payton is charged with reviving Russell Wilson's stalled career in Denver. The former Saints head coach (he went 152-89 in 15 seasons in New Orleans) has some enviable pieces with which to work — including Wilson, who could benefit greatly from a new scheme and new culture.

HOUSTON TEXANS

Old: Lovie Smith | New: DeMeco Ryans

Ryans was the architect of a stellar San Francisco defense — arguably the NFL's best — but Job 1 in Houston is breaking in a new starting QB in Ohio State's C.J. Stroud, the No. 2 pick in the draft. It's a tall assignment for the 39-year-old rookie head coach, but he should have time to fix a franchise that is clearly in rebuilding mode.

INDIANAPOLIS COLTS

Old: Frank Reich | New: Shane Steichen

Steichen will be under some win-now pressure from a starved fan base. The Colts drafted Anthony Richardson at No. 4 with the hope of finding some QB stability; Steichen also will hope for a healthy season from RB Jonathan Taylor.

COORDINATORS

BALTIMORE RAVENS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR

Old: Greg Roman | New: Todd Monken

After three wildly successful seasons as Georgia's offensive coordinator, Monken returns to the pro ranks to lead an offense that welcomes back QB Lamar Jackson after offseason contract drama.

BUFFALO BILLS

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR

Old: Leslie Frazier | New: Todd McDermott

Frazier opted in February to take the 2023 season off with plans to return in 2024. Head coach McDermott will take the reins of a defense that was second in the NFL in points allowed in 2022.

CLEVELAND BROWNS

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR

Old: Joe Woods | New: Jim Schwartz

Schwartz enters his fourth stint as an NFL defensive coordinator, and he inherits a solid unit that ranked fifth in the NFL in pass defense last season.

DENVER BRONCOS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR

Old: Justin Outten
New: Joe Lombardi

The grandson of Vince Lombardi is reunited with Sean Payton, his boss in New Orleans, where Lombardi served as QBs coach for five seasons (2016-20).

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR

Old: Ejiro Evero
New: Vance Joseph

This is Joseph's sixth season as an NFL defensive coordinator — a run that was interrupted by an unsuccessful two-year stint as Broncos head coach.

HOUSTON TEXANS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR

Old: Pep Hamilton
New: Bobby Slowik

Part of the Mike Shanahan tree, Slowik gets his first chance to run an NFL offense after serving as the 49ers' passing game coordinator last season.

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR

Old: Lovie Smith
New: Matt Burke

The Ivy-educated Burke (Dartmouth) enters his second stint as an NFL defensive coordinator. Most recently, he was defensive line coach for the Cardinals.

INDIANAPOLIS COLTS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR

Old: Marcus Brady
New: Jim Bob Cooter

Cooter gets a second shot as an offensive coordinator after previously serving two-plus seasons in Detroit in that capacity.

KANSAS CITY CHIEFS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR

Old: Eric Bieniemy
New: Matt Nagy

This will be Andy Reid's offense as long as he's in K.C., but Nagy is a longtime Reid lieutenant who should provide a seamless transition following Eric Bieniemy's departure to Washington.

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR

Old: Joe Lombardi
New: Kellen Moore

Moore never quite seemed able to maximize Dak Prescott's talents in Dallas; we'll see how he does with Justin Herbert.

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR

Old: Renaldo Hill
New: Derrick Ansley

Ansley was the defensive backs coach for a Chargers defense that ranked seventh in the NFL against the pass in 2022.

MIAMI DOLPHINS

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR

Old: Josh Boyer
New: Vic Fangio

Fangio is 44 years into a career that began at Dunmore High School in Pennsylvania and is embarking on his sixth stint as an NFL defensive coordinator.

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR

Old: Matt Patricia/Joe Judge
New: Bill O'Brien

Bill Belichick hired O'Brien away from Nick Saban at Alabama and brought him back to New England, where his three seasons as the play-caller (2009-11) were among the most productive of the Belichick era.

NEW YORK JETS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR

Old: Matt LaFleur
New: Nathaniel Hackett

Hackett is reunited with Aaron Rodgers, who won back-to-back MVPs in Green Bay (2020, '21) with Hackett as his OC.

TENNESSEE TITANS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR

Old: Todd Downing
New: Tim Kelly

Downing's much-maligned tenure came to a merciful end. Kelly, promoted from passing game coordinator, will try to get one more good season out of the Ryan Tannehill-Derrick Henry duo.

BUF BILLS

AFC EAST FORECAST **2**

2023 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 11	at N.Y. Jets	8:15
Sept. 17	Las Vegas	1:00
Sept. 24	at Washington	1:00
Oct. 1	Miami	1:00
Oct. 8	Jacksonville (London)	9:30
Oct. 15	N.Y. Giants	8:20
Oct. 22	at New England	1:00
Oct. 26	Tampa Bay	8:15
Nov. 5	at Cincinnati	8:20
Nov. 13	Denver	8:15
Nov. 19	N.Y. Jets	4:25
Nov. 26	at Philadelphia	4:25
Dec. 3	BYE	
Dec. 10	at Kansas City	4:25
Dec. 17	Dallas	4:25
Dec. 23	at L.A. Chargers	8:00
Dec. 31	New England	1:00
Jan. 7	at Miami	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

THE COACHES

Head Coach: Sean McDermott
Record With Team: 62-35
Career Record: 62-35
Offensive Coordinator: Ken Dorsey
Defensive Coordinator: Sean McDermott
Special Teams Coordinator: Matthew Smiley
Quarterbacks: Joe Brady
Running Backs: Kelly Skipper
Wide Receivers: Adam Henry
Tight Ends: Rob Boras
Offensive Line: Aaron Kromer
Defensive Line: Eric Washington
Linebackers: Bobby Babich
Defensive Backs/Passing Game Coordinator: John Butler
Safeties: Joe Danna

General manager Brandon Beane and head coach Sean McDermott spent the last three seasons building their team into a consistent playoff contender. Unfortunately for the Bills Mafia, those years have fallen short of expectations. Two bitter playoff losses to the Chiefs (including a 13-second collapse that lives in infamy) and one last season to the surging Bengals have left many asking if Buffalo's Super Bowl window has begun to close. As long as unicorn quarterback Josh Allen is around, that window will never be completely shut, but make no mistake: McDermott faces extreme scrutiny as he attempts to prove that he's the coach capable of getting this talented roster over the hump — especially now that he's taken on defensive play-calling duties.

OFFENSE

Led by Allen and wide receiver Stefon Diggs, this unit has blitzed the NFL for an average of 29.4 points per game since 2020. Allen, the prize catch of the 2018 quarterback class, is an established superstar who can take over games passing or running. Despite a painful elbow injury, Allen's numbers last season (5,045 yards of total offense, 42 touchdowns) kept him in the MVP conversation as the Bills' offense ranked No. 2 in yards and points. If there's any knock on his game, it is his desire to do too much; many of his 29 interceptions the past two seasons have been the result of needless risk-taking, particularly in the red zone. Buffalo's 27 turnovers were second most in the NFL last season. Still, Allen is a dominant force, and his remark that he's "never been as focused and locked in on football as [he is] now" should send shivers through the league.

As for Diggs, he shares Allen's attitude of hating to lose as evidenced by his occasional sideline outbursts. He's an elite route-runner with hands to match, and his numbers (108 catches, 1,429 yards, 11 TDs) speak for themselves. After Diggs, there is a drop at receiver — not in talent, but consistency. Gabe Davis and Isaiah McKenzie (released) were promoted to bigger roles in 2022 and fell short of expectations, so much so that the Bills brought back departed veterans John Brown and Cole Beasley late in the year.

The team signed Saints free agent Deonte Harty, who will contribute from the slot, and ex-Dolphin Trent Sherfield in an effort to give Allen more weapons. What's really needed is for the talented Davis, a scorching deep threat, to improve his 51.6 catch percentage. The team could also use a big Year 2 jump from Khalil Shakir, a 2022 fifth-round pick who showed flashes in limited work.

Tight end is where Buffalo made a significant upgrade, provided that coordinator Ken Dorsey is skilled enough to use both Dawson Knox and first-round pick Dalton Kincaid effectively. Kincaid is an elite pass catcher who can run from the slot or split out. When the Bills go 12 personnel, Kincaid's presence should force more opponents to play nickel, a package that a good running game could exploit.

To that end, the Bills have loaded up their training camp roster with running backs. With Devin Singletary now in Houston, second-year man James Cook slides into the No. 1 role with young veterans Nyheim Hines and free agent Damien Harris backing him up. Harris, who scored 20 TDs in four seasons with New England, brings needed size and power to the position. The same goes for former Pro Bowler Latavius Murray, who has a shot to make the roster at age 33 if there's a role for him.

The line is above average and will return four starters: center Mitch Morse,

tackles Dion Dawkins and Spencer Brown and guard Ryan Bates. The key newcomers are free agents Connor McGovern and David Edwards and second-round pick O'Cyrus Torrence. McGovern, signed to a three-year, $22.3 million deal, will quickly upgrade the left guard spot as he allowed just two sacks in 15 starts for Dallas. Edwards, who started all 17 games for the Rams during their 2021 Super Bowl championship run, will challenge for the job but is solid backup insurance. Torrence, meanwhile, will push Bates at right guard. At 6-foot-5 and 347 pounds, the Florida Gator is a walking solar eclipse who allowed zero sacks in college.

JAMIE SABAU-USA TODAY SPORTS

DEFENSE

The Bills' defense has ranked in the NFL's top six in four of the last six seasons, but playoff success has not followed. Cincinnati racked up 412 yards, including 172 rushing, in dispatching Buffalo on its home field in the divisional round. That has led to a major shift in focus for 2023, with McDermott assuming game-day play calling to go with his head-coaching duties. Longtime friend and defensive coordinator Leslie Frazier is on sabbatical. It remains to be seen if McDermott will be more aggressive with his lineup than the conservative Frazier was.

While the Bills retained warrior safety Jordan Poyer, key free agent linebacker Tremaine Edmunds was lost to the Bears on a $72 million deal, creating a big void that wasn't filled in free agency or the draft. Edmunds and Matt Milano were one of the NFL's top tandems for five seasons, totaling 974 tackles, 17 sacks, 50 QB hits, 12 interceptions and 70 passes defended. Young prospects Tyrel Dodson and Terrel Bernard will compete for Edmunds' spot, but look for scheme adjustments to compensate for the loss of Edmunds' size and range.

Up front, McDermott is certain to keep Frazier's eight-man rotation. End Greg Rousseau (8.0 sacks, 14 QB hits) is blossoming, and if perennial Pro Bowler Von Miller can return to full strength from ACL surgery, Buffalo's edge rushing will be formidable again, especially with Shaq Lawson, Boogie Basham and A.J. Epenesa in the wings. Miller had 8.0 sacks, 10 tackles for a loss and 12 QB hits through 11 games, and a fresh superstar for the second half of 2023 would give the Bills a giant lift. At defensive tackle, former first-round pick Ed Oliver enters a contract year and will be looking to improve on his 2.5 sacks. He's a first-rate gap penetrator but can get swallowed up. In the case of down-and-distance calls, a thicker-bodied Jordan Phillips, Poona Ford and DaQuan Jones are available.

The secondary brims with experience and talent. Pro Bowl corner Tre'Davious White, coming off ACL surgery, returned to the lineup for six games last season and got his sea legs back, while Christian Benford and Kaiir Elam turned in encouraging rookie seasons on the opposite side. Taron Johnson (90 tackles) remains one of the best slot cover men, and Dane Jackson, who started 14 games, was a key re-signing.

Meanwhile the band is back together at safety with Poyer rejoining Micah Hyde. They've been the backbone of McDermott's defense. Hyde will be coming off a neck injury that sidelined him most of 2022, but he's been given full clearance. The same goes for Damar Hamlin, who started 13 games in Hyde's place and had 91 tackles before suffering on-field cardiac arrest in the team's Week 17 game vs. the Bengals. He has been medically cleared to resume his career.

SPECIALISTS

Third-year pro Tyler Bass has established himself as one of the NFL's top placekickers, hitting 85.6 percent of his career field-goal tries. He has yet to miss from inside 30 yards (29-of-29). Veteran punter Sam Martin posted a 47.7-yard average. Hines and newcomer Harty give the Bills two explosive return specialists. Hines had 96- and 101-yard kickoff returns against New England in Week 18.

FINAL ANALYSIS

Disappointing playoff exits aside, the Bills sport a deep, talented roster with a top-five quarterback. If they can stay healthy, plug a hole or two and not be afraid to tweak their defensive philosophy, maybe this can be their year.

2022 RESULTS (13-3)

Sept.	8	at L.A. Rams	W	31-10
Sept.	19	Tennessee	W	41-7
Sept.	25	at Miami	L	19-21
Oct.	2	at Baltimore	W	23-20
Oct.	9	Pittsburgh	W	38-3
Oct.	16	at Kansas City	W	24-20
Oct.	30	Green Bay	W	27-17
Nov.	6	at New York Jets	L	17-20
Nov.	13	Minnesota (ot)	L	30-33
Nov.	20	Cleveland	W	31-23
Nov.	24	at Detroit	W	28-25
Dec.	1	at New England	W	24-10
Dec.	11	N.Y. Jets	W	20-12
Dec.	17	Miami	W	32-29
Dec.	24	at Chicago	W	35-13
Jan.	2	at Cincinnati		Canceled
Jan.	8	New England	W	35-23
Postseason				
Jan.	15	Miami	W	34-31
Jan.	22	Cincinnati	L	10-27

2022 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	397.6	2	2
Rushing	139.5	7	3
Passing	258.1	7	5
Scoring	28.4	2	2
Third Down %	50.3	1	1
EPA/Play	0.111	2	2
TO Differential	0	15	7

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	319.1	6	2
Rushing	104.6	5	4
Passing	214.6	15	7
Scoring	20.1	5	9
Interceptions	17	T4	3
Sacks	40	T14	T6
EPA/Play	-0.045	T6	T2

2022 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Josh Allen	567	359	4,283	35	14
Case Keenum	7	2	8	0	0

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Devin Singletary	177	819	4.6	5
Josh Allen	124	762	6.1	7
James Cook	89	507	5.7	2

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Stefon Diggs	108	1,429	13.2	11
Gabe Davis	48	836	17.4	7
Dawson Knox	48	517	10.8	6
Isaiah McKenzie	42	423	10.1	4
Devin Singletary	38	280	7.4	1

KICKING: Tyler Bass, 27-31 FGs, 48-50 PAT, 129 points
TACKLES: Tremaine Edmunds, 102; Matt Milano, 99
SACKS: Von Miller, 8.0; Greg Rousseau, 8.0
INTERCEPTIONS: Jordan Poyer, 4; Matt Milano, 3

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

NO AIR JORDAN Before Buffalo's game at Kansas City last season, All-Pro safety **Jordan Poyer** was cleared to play but not to fly due to a collapsed lung. The solution? Drive to the game. The Bills rented a van and hired a driver so Jordan could face the Chiefs. Keeping him company on the 28-hour, nearly 2,000-mile round trip were his wife and child. "I'm super proud of my family," said Poyer after the Bills' 24-20 win. "For them to do that, it was crazy."

GIVE HIM THE BALL The Bills found a goal-line option in free-agent guard Connor McGovern, who started 15 games for the Cowboys and was used as a goal-line fullback. "A lot of linebackers think they can just beat me to the hole; they don't know that I can get there, too," the 318-pound McGovern told Fansided. "It's just a lot of fun, livin' a lot of fat kids' dreams."

GOLF GOD It's no secret that QB Josh Allen loves golf. He has played in the Pebble Beach Pro-Am and during the offseason attended the Genesis Invitational in Los Angeles, where he met and shook hands with none other than Tiger Woods. "A little star-struck obviously," Allen told *USA Today*. "He's one of the only athletes ever — him and Kobe (Bryant) — that I actually felt my heart beat faster."

RELENTLESS Buffalo's 2022 season will go down as one of the most challenging in NFL history. It included a mass shooting at a Buffalo grocery store, the death of tight end Dalton Knox's brother, two deadly snowstorms, a home game moved to Detroit, Damar Hamlin going into cardiac arrest on the field and season-ending injuries to defensive stars Micah Hyde and Von Miller. And still, the Bills finished 13-3 and won the AFC East for a third consecutive season.

SCOUTING THE BILLS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP BUFFALO "Josh Allen, as long as he protects himself more and takes fewer risks, the arrow just keeps pointing up. … Stefon Diggs' patience is being tested, and it's obvious how frustrated he was with the team in the playoffs. Diggs runs hot and cold, but his commitment to winning is unmatched. … It's no secret how much Josh likes throwing to tight ends. Just ask Dawson Knox. Now, they draft Dalton Kincaid. Our medical on Kincaid told us that he should be fine. It's not a long-term concern with his back. … Gabe Davis is seriously underrated. I don't think they'll be able to afford to keep him in free agency next season. … James Cook is more than Dalvin Cook's little brother. He's got game. … Dion Dawkins' hand punch and fan technique on pass-blocking sets are seriously tough to counter. … Their AFC East dominance is being challenged. Aaron Rodgers just joined one of their rivals. … Poona Ford's market was depressed by a rough season. He's better off playing inside 90 percent of the time. … A healthy Von Miller makes a big difference. He's still a great bender and finisher off the edge. … Ed Oliver has always flashed talent, but the lack of consistency and moodiness are issues to watch. … Matt Milano's off-the-ball skills are unique. He's got a knack for finding the football and is a sound tackler. … When everyone is healthy, this is a really strong secondary with Tre'Davious White, Jordan Poyer, Micah Hyde and Kaiir Elam. Their secondary coach, John Butler, does a good job of teaching the fundamentals, and guys buy into his teaching methods."

LON HORWEDEL/USA TODAY SPORTS

2023 BILLS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS.	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
17 Allen, Josh	QB	6-5	237	5	Wyoming	D1a-18	D1a-Buf-18
9 Allen, Kyle	QB	6-3	210	4	Houston	FA-Hou-23	FA-Car-18
5 Barkley, Matt	QB	6-2	234	10	USC	FA-22	D3-Phi-13
RUNNING BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
4 Cook, James	RB	5-11	190	1	Georgia	D2-22	D2-Buf-22
41 Gilliam, Reggie	FB	6-0	244	3	Toledo	FA-20	FA-Buf-20
22 Harris, Damien	RB	5-11	213	4	Alabama	FA-NE-23	D3b-NE-19
0 Hines, Nyheim	RB	5-9	196	5	NC State	T-Ind-22	D4-Ind-18
28 Murray, Latavius	RB	6-3	230	9	UCF	FA-Den-23	D6-LV-13
RECEIVERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
84 Davidson, Zach	TE	6-7	251	1	Central Missouri	FA-22	D5-Min-21
13 Davis, Gabe	WR	6-2	225	3	UCF	D4-20	D4-Buf-20
14 Diggs, Stefon	WR	6-0	191	8	Maryland	T-Min-20	D5b-Min-15
11 Harty, Deonte	WR	5-6	170	4	Assumption	FA-NO-23	FA-NO-19
81 Johnson, KeeSean	WR	6-1	201	3	Fresno State	FA-22	D6-Ari-19
88 Knox, Dawson	TE	6-4	254	4	Ole Miss	D3b-19	D3b-Buf-19
85 Morris, Quintin	TE	6-2	252	1	Bowling Green	FA-21	FA-Buf-21
19 Patmon, Dezmon	WR	6-4	225	3	Washington State	FA-23	D6-Ind-20
10 Shakir, Khalil	WR	6-0	190	1	Boise State	D5-22	D5-Buf-22
16 Sherfield, Trent	WR	6-1	206	5	Vanderbilt	FA-Mia-23	FA-Ari-18
OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
70 Anderson, Alec	T	6-5	305	1	UCLA	FA-22	FA-Buf-22
71 Bates, Ryan	G/C	6-4	302	4	Penn State	T-Phi-19	FA-Phi-19
65 Boettger, Ike	G	6-6	313	5	Iowa	W-KC-18	FA-Buf-18
79 Brown, Spencer	T	6-8	311	2	Northern Iowa	D3-21	D3-Buf-21
73 Dawkins, Dion	T	6-5	320	6	Temple	D2b-17	D2b-Buf-17
72 Doyle, Tommy	T	6-8	320	2	Miami (Ohio)	D5-21	D5-Buf-21
Edwards, David	G	6-6	308	4	Wisconsin	FA-LAR-23	D5-LAR-19
63 Jarvis, Kevin	OL	6-6	325	1	Michigan State	FA-23	FA-Det-22
62 Mancz, Greg	OL	6-4	302	8	Toledo	FA-22	FA-Hou-15
66 McGovern, Connor	G	6-5	318	4	Penn State	FA-Dal-23	D3-Dal-19
60 Morse, Mitch	C	6-6	305	8	Missouri	FA-KC-19	D2-KC-15
77 Quessenberry, David	T/G	6-5	310	5	Wake Forest	FA-Ten-22	D6-Hou-13
74 Van Demark, Ryan	T	6-6	307	1	Connecticut	FA-22	FA-Ind-22
DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
51 Ankou, Eli	DT	6-3	325	6	UCLA	FA-21	FA-Hou-17
55 Basham, Boogie	DE	6-3	274	2	Wake Forest	D2-21	D2-Buf-21
94 Broughton, Cortez	DT	6-2	293	3	Cincinnati	FA-22	D7-LAC-19
96 Bryant, Brandin	DT	6-4	310	1	Florida Atlantic	FA-22	FA-Sea-16
Cline, Kameron	DE	6-4	275	2	South Dakota	W-Ind-23	FA-Ind-20
57 Epenesa, A.J.	DE	6-6	260	3	Iowa	D2-20	D2-Buf-20
98 Ford, Poona	DT	5-11	310	5	Texas	FA-Sea-23	FA-Sea-18
59 Jonathan, Kingsley	DE	6-4	260	1	Syracuse	FA-22	FA-Buf-22
92 Jones, DaQuan	DT	6-4	320	9	Penn State	FA-Car-22	D4a-Ten-14
90 Lawson, Shaq	DE	6-3	265	7	Clemson	FA-NYJ-22	D1-Buf-16
40 Miller, Von	DE	6-3	250	12	Texas A&M	FA-LAR-22	D1-Den-11
91 Oliver, Ed	DT	6-1	287	4	Houston	D1-19	D1-Buf-19
97 Phillips, Jordan	DT	6-6	341	8	Oklahoma	FA-Ari-22	D2-Mia-15
50 Rousseau, Greg	DE	6-6	266	2	Miami (Fla.)	D1-21	D1-Buf-21
99 Settle, Tim	DT	6-3	313	5	Virginia Tech	FA-Was-22	D5-Was-18
LINEBACKERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
43 Bernard, Terrel	LB	6-1	224	1	Baylor	D3-22	D3-Buf-22
53 Dodson, Tyrel	LB	6-0	237	3	Texas A&M	FA-19	FA-Buf-19
42 Giles-Harris, Joe	LB	6-2	240	2	Duke	FA-21	FA-Jac-19
52 Klein, A.J.	LB	6-1	240	10	Iowa State	W-Chi-22	D5-Car-13
44 Matakevich, Tyler	LB	6-1	235	7	Temple	FA-Pit-20	D7b-Pit-16
58 Milano, Matt	LB	6-0	223	6	Boston College	D5a-17	D5a-Buf-17
54 Spector, Baylon	LB	6-0	233	1	Clemson	D7-22	D7-Buf-22
DEFENSIVE BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
38 Anderson, Zayne	S	6-2	206	1	BYU	FA-23	FA-KC-21
47 Benford, Christian	CB	6-1	205	1	Villanova	D6b-22	D6b-Buf-22
24 Elam, Kaiir	CB	6-1	191	1	Florida	D1-22	D1-Buf-22
3 Hamlin, Damar	S	6-0	200	2	Pittsburgh	D6b-21	D6b-Buf-21
23 Hyde, Micah	S	6-0	197	10	Iowa	FA-17	D5-GB-13
46 Ingram, Ja'Marcus	CB	6-2	190	1	Buffalo	FA-22	FA-Buf-22
30 Jackson, Dane	CB	5-11	180	3	Pittsburgh	D7-20	D7-Buf-20
7 Johnson, Taron	CB	5-11	192	5	Weber State	D4-18	D4-Buf-18
39 Lewis, Cam	CB	5-9	183	3	Buffalo	FA-19	FA-Buf-19
36 Mayden, Jared	S	6-0	205	1	Alabama	FA-22	FA-SF-20
32 McMichael, Kyler	CB	6-0	202	1	North Carolina	FA-22	FA-TB-22
33 Neal, Siran	CB	6-0	206	5	Jacksonville State	D5a-18	D5a-Buf-18
21 Poyer, Jordan	S	6-0	191	10	Oregon State	FA-17	D7-Phi-13
20 Rapp, Taylor	S	6-0	208	4	Washington	FA-LAR-23	D2-LAR-19
27 White, Tre'Davious	CB	5-11	192	6	LSU	D1-17	D1-Buf-17
SPECIALISTS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
2 Bass, Tyler	K	5-10	183	3	Georgia Southern	D6-20	D6-Buf-20
69 Ferguson, Reid	LS	6-2	235	6	LSU	FA-16	FA-Buf-16
8 Martin, Sam	P	6-1	211	10	Appalachian State	FA-22	D5-Det-13

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	13	Gabe Davis	18	Justin Shorter (R)
WR	14	Stefon Diggs	16	Trent Sherfield
WR	10	Khalil Shakir	11	Deonte Harty
LT	73	Dion Dawkins	72	Tommy Doyle
LG	66	Connor McGovern		David Edwards
C	60	Mitch Morse	62	Greg Mancz
RG	71	Ryan Bates	64	O'Cyrus Torrence (R)
RT	79	Spencer Brown	77	David Quessenberry
TE	88	Dawson Knox	86	Dalton Kincaid (R)
QB	17	Josh Allen	9	Kyle Allen
RB	4	James Cook	22	Damien Harris

DEFENSE

DE	50	Greg Rousseau	55	Boogie Basham
DT	91	Ed Oliver	97	Jordan Phillips
DT	92	DaQuan Jones	98	Poona Ford
DE	40	Von Miller	90	Shaq Lawson
MLB	53	Tyrel Dodson	43	Terrel Bernard
WLB	58	Matt Milano	52	A.J. Klein
CB	27	Tre'Davious White	47	Christian Benford
CB	24	Kaiir Elam	30	Dane Jackson
NB	7	Taron Johnson	33	Siran Neal
SS	21	Jordan Poyer	38	Zayne Anderson
FS	23	Micah Hyde	3	Damar Hamlin

SPECIALISTS

K	2	Tyler Bass	KR	0 Nyheim Hines
P	8	Sam Martin	PR	0 Nyheim Hines

5,205

Quarterback Josh Allen led all passers with 5,205 intended air yards last season, according to Pro Football Reference. Tom Brady came in second with 4,876.

BILLS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B+

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Dalton Kincaid	TE	6-4	240	Utah
2.	O'Cyrus Torrence	OG	6-5	347	Florida
3.	Dorian Williams	LB	6-2	230	Tulane
5	Justin Shorter	WR	6-4	223	Florida
7	Nick Broeker	OG	6-4	305	Ole Miss
7	Alex Austin	CB	6-1	191	Oregon St.

Nobody's calling Dalton Kincaid the next Travis Kelce or George Kittle, but the Bills undoubtedly added a unique weapon for Josh Allen. Kincaid was far and away the best pass-catching tight end in the draft and fills a team void for a big slot receiver. O'Cyrus Torrence is a massive human specimen who has a chance to start and neutralize the array of big defensive tackles the Bills face in the AFC East. Dorian Williams, unfortunately, isn't the plug-and-play middle linebacker desperately needed to replace Tremaine Edmunds, but he adds depth and special teams ability.

DOLPHINS

AFC EAST FORECAST **1**

2023 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 10	at L.A. Chargers	4:25
Spet. 17	at New England	8:20
Sept. 24	Denver	1:00
Oct. 1	at Buffalo	1:00
Oct. 8	N.Y. Giants	1:00
Oct. 15	Carolina	1:00
Oct. 22	at Philadelphia	8:20
Oct. 29	New England	1:00
Nov. 5	Kansas City (London)	9:30
Nov. 12	BYE	
Nov. 19	Las Vegas	1:00
Nov. 24	at N.Y. Jets	3:00
Dec. 3	at Washington	1:00
Dec. 11	Tennessee	8:15
Dec. 17	New York Jets	1:00
Dec. 24	Dallas	4:25
Dec. 31	at Baltimore	1:00
Jan. 7	Buffalo	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

THE COACHES

Head Coach: Mike McDaniel
Record With Team: 9-8
Career Record: 9-8
Offensive Coordinator: Frank Smith
Defensive Coordinator: Vic Fangio
Special Teams Coordinator: Danny Crossman
Passing Game Coordinator/Quarterbacks: Darrell Bevell
Assoc. Head Coach/Running Backs: Eric Studesville
Wide Receivers: Wes Welker
Asst. Head Coach/Tight Ends: Jon Embree
Offensive Line: Butch Barry
Defensive Line: Austin Clark
Linebackers: Anthony Campanile
Outside Linebackers: Ryan Slowik
Cornerbacks: Sam Madison
Passing Game Coord.: Renaldo Hill
Safeties: Joe Kasper

The Miami Dolphins are due for a playoff win. The franchise hasn't had a postseason victory since 2000, and the 2023 team might be the one best equipped to do it since the turn of the millennium.

After the major acquisitions of wide receiver Tyreek Hill, left tackle Terron Armstead and edge defender Bradley Chubb last year, the Dolphins made another big splash this offseason by trading for elite cornerback Jalen Ramsey. Even more integral to improving the defense, though, might be the addition of coveted defensive coordinator Vic Fangio.

Head coach Mike McDaniel will take lessons learned from his first year leading a franchise to try to navigate the Dolphins deeper than the AFC wild-card appearance they made last postseason, which resulted in a sixth loss in seven games to end the year following an 8-3 start.

But most important to determining the team's success might be quarterback Tua Tagovailoa's health. He missed five and a half games in 2022 due to two separate stints in concussion protocol.

OFFENSE

Tagovailoa led the NFL in passer rating (105.5) and yards per pass attempt (8.9) while tossing 25 touchdowns to eight interceptions. It showed, in a critical third season for the 2020 No. 5 overall pick out of Alabama, that he could operate McDaniel's offense and deliver passes when surrounded by weapons such as Hill and Jaylen Waddle. The question is his ability to last a full season. The left-handed thrower has been taking measures this offseason to learn how to fall better while strengthening his body overall.

Quarterback aside, the Dolphins offense's claim to fame is speed, including the fleet Hill and Waddle in the receiving corps. Hill has the fastest in-game ball-carrier speed in the NFL (23.24 mph) since NextGen Stats began recording such data in 2016. Last year, Waddle topped out at 21.68 mph. In the duo's first year together, Hill (1,710 yards) and Waddle (1,356) combined for the third-most receiving yards (3,066) for a pair of teammates, behind Herman Moore and Brett Perriman (3,174 for the Lions in 1995) and Torry Holt and Isaac Bruce (3,106 for the Rams in 2000).

Several wideouts will compete for opportunities alongside Hill and Waddle. The Dolphins signed Chosen Anderson (formerly Robby Anderson), who can also stretch the field and has a lanky 6-foot-3 frame, bringing size and length the receiving corps otherwise doesn't possess. Fellow new addition Braxton Berrios is a return specialist who can also contribute in the slot.

Miami lost its third-leading receiver Trent Sherfield to the Bills and tight end Mike Gesicki to the Patriots. Durham Smythe should shoulder more of the tight end reps after receiving an extension.

Raheem Mostert, although 31, is in the conversation among the league's fastest running backs. The Dolphins also drafted Texas A&M's Devon Achane, who ran a 4.32-second 40-yard dash, fastest among running backs at the combine. Jeff Wilson Jr., whom the Dolphins acquired at last season's trade deadline, is the power runner to complement them.

The offensive line appears solidified at three spots — left tackle with four-time Pro Bowler Armstead, center with Connor Williams and right guard with Robert Hunt. Miami has used high draft picks on right tackle Austin Jackson (2020 first-round pick) and left guard Liam Eichenberg (2021 second-rounder) and needs to see what those two have in pivotal seasons for each.

DEFENSE

The Dolphins' defense, while having talented personnel, was in need of a makeover after a season in which the unit finished the regular season 30th in takeaways, 27th in pass defense, 24th in scoring defense and 18th in total defense.

In comes Fangio, who will turn 65 before the season. He has 19 years of NFL defensive coordinator experience and three as a head coach (with the Broncos from 2019-21). His scheme will incorporate a variety of zone coverages, a switch from the press-man and high blitz rates of previous coordinator Josh Boyer.

The Dolphins needed to make a move at cornerback and did so in a big way by trading for the six-time Pro Bowl, three-time All-Pro selection Ramsey. He's in a similar defense to what he was used to with the Rams, and he could be used in the versatile "star" position — not just as a lockdown boundary cornerback.

If Miami's own four-time Pro Bowl corner, Xavien Howard, can bounce back from a 2022 season in which he was hampered by groin injuries, was often beaten in coverage and failed to force turnovers the way he has previously, the duo could form a top cornerback duo in the league.

The Dolphins will look to supplement the coverage with the pass rush. Chubb had only 2.5 sacks in seven regular-season starts since the move at last season's trade deadline. Now comfortable in his new surroundings and reunited with Fangio, who coached him in Denver, he's a candidate to take off. Miami will have 2021 first-round pick Jaelan Phillips rushing opposite Chubb. Defensive end Emmanuel Ogbah can look to return to his form from 2020 and 2021, when he had nine sacks in both seasons. Andrew Van Ginkel and Malik Reed, another Fangio edge rusher from his Broncos days, can rotate in.

Former Titans do-it-all inside linebacker David Long Jr. was an underrated pickup. Miami linebackers struggled in covering pass-catching running backs and keeping up with mobile quarterbacks in 2022.

Up front, Christian Wilkins and Zach Sieler are a potent defensive tackle duo. They don't put up big sack numbers but are active tacklers who anchored the No. 4 rush defense last season. The two of them and nose tackle Raekwon Davis go into contract years unless long-term deals are reached.

Fangio has worked wonders for an array of safeties in all his recent stops, and that could benefit third-year free safety Jevon Holland, who looks to have his range and ballhawking abilities translate into a Year 3 leap.

Next to him, Brandon Jones will have competition in DeShon Elliott, coming over from Detroit. Jones is recovering from a season-ending torn ACL. Nickel cornerback presents another battle, as 2022 undrafted rookie Kader Kohou, who started 13 games last season, will have Nik Needham vying for playing time coming off his torn Achilles.

SPECIALISTS

Kicker Jason Sanders was 26-of-32 on field goals last season with four of the misses from beyond 50 yards, while also failing on three extra points. He did send Miami to the playoffs with a game-winning 50-yarder with 18 seconds left to beat the Jets in Week 18.

The Dolphins made a move at punter, bringing in former Patriot Jake Bailey. Their 2022 punter, Thomas Morstead, is now with the Jets.

Berrios brings a return specialist after the Dolphins didn't have a set player to handle those duties last season. Rookie running back Achane's explosiveness could be an option on kick returns, though, while Berrios will field punts.

FINAL ANALYSIS

The 2023 Dolphins are in a win-now window while Tagovailoa is still cheap and before big financial commitments could create salary cap headaches that eventually will lead to tough roster decisions. Miami certainly has the talent across the roster to contend. If McDaniel can bring it together and Tagovailoa stays healthy while Fangio fixes the defense, the Dolphins have the potential to reach the divisional round with an outside shot at going further.

SAM NAVARRO-USA TODAY SPORTS

2022 RESULTS (9-8)

Sept. 11	New England	W	20-7
Sept. 18	at Baltimore	W	42-38
Sept. 25	Buffalo	W	21-19
Sept. 29	at Cincinnati	L	15-27
Oct. 9	at N.Y. Jets	L	17-40
Oct. 16	Minnesota	L	16-24
Oct. 23	Pittsburgh	W	16-10
Oct. 30	at Detroit	W	31-27
Nov. 6	at Chicago	W	35-32
Nov. 13	Cleveland	W	39-17
Nov. 27	Houston	W	30-15
Dec. 4	at San Francisco	L	17-33
Dec. 1	at L.A. Chargers	L	17-23
Dec. 17	at Buffalo	L	29-32
Dec. 25	Green Bay	L	20-26
Jan. 1	at New England	L	21-23
Jan. 8	New York Jets	W	11-6
Postseason			
Jan. 15	at Buffalo	L	31-34

2022 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	364.5	6	3
Rushing	99.2	T25	T12
Passing	265.4	4	3
Scoring	23.4	11	5
Third Down %	36.2	24	11
EPA/Play	0.054	7	4
TO Differential	-7	T28	T13

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	337.8	18	11
Rushing	103.0	4	3
Passing	234.8	27	13
Scoring	23.5	24	13
Interceptions	8	29	15
Sacks	40	T14	T6
EPA/Play	0.022	24	14

2022 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Tua Tagovailoa	400	259	3,548	25	8
Skylar Thompson	105	60	534	1	3
Teddy Bridgewater	79	49	683	4	4

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Raheem Mostert	181	891	4.9	3
Jeff Wilson Jr.	84	392	4.7	3

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Tyreek Hill	119	1,710	14.4	7
Jaylen Waddle	75	1,356	18.1	8
Mike Gesicki	32	362	11.3	5
Raheem Mostert	31	202	6.5	2
Trent Sherfield	30	417	13.9	2

KICKING: Jason Sanders, 26-32 FGs, 41-44 PAT, 119 points
TACKLES: Elandon Roberts, 107; Jerome Baker, 100
SACKS: Jaelan Phillips, 7.0; Melvin Ingram III, 6.0
INTERCEPTIONS: Jevon Holland, 2; six tied with 1

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

TUA'S JIU-JITSU Quarterback **Tua Tagovailoa** is taking jiu-jitsu lessons in the offseason to better protect himself from blows to the head on the football field that lead to concussions. No, he's not going to take his knowledge of the Japanese martial art out on opposing defenders, but he can use some of the foundational techniques to create muscle memory that helps him land in less dangerous positions. Tagovailoa admitted this offseason he considered stepping away from the game after his second diagnosed concussion in the 2022 season. But after conversations with his family, he decided he was too young to retire and wanted his young son to one day watch him play at an age where he can understand what's happening on the field.

BRADY CONVERSATIONS As much as the Dolphins' company line is one of full support for Tagovailoa as their starting quarterback — and as convincing as Tom Brady sounded in his latest retirement video — it seems like a month can't go by without some story or report linking Brady to the Dolphins. Brady has been living in South Florida since retirement from the Buccaneers and has ties to many within the organization as high up as owner Stephen Ross. The Dolphins seem set on rolling with Tagovailoa for now, but in the event he goes down with a long-term injury while the team is in contention, could Miami keep a line of communication open with the GOAT instead of relying on either Mike White or Skylar Thompson?

FRESH FANGIO Although he was widely believed to be with the Philadelphia Eagles as a defensive consultant last season, Vic Fangio essentially took the year off in 2022 after a three-year run as Denver Broncos head coach. "I treated it like a college professor on a sabbatical," Fangio told the Dolphins' team site in his first public comments after joining the team. He then signed a two-week contract to help the Philadelphia offense with Super Bowl prep for the Kansas City Chiefs' defense. Through the time off, he still kept tabs on the league. "I had a full video setup of everything in the league," he said. "Already came up with a new coverage or two that I'm anxious to try out."

SCOUTING THE DOLPHINS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP MIAMI "Tua Tagovailoa's concussion issues are really serious. Obviously, he got cleared, but he's susceptible to these things now. Beyond the availability issue, you have to worry about his long-term well-being. … When Tua is healthy, he's very accurate, and his arm strength isn't bad at all. He can get the football where it needs to go. … Tyreek Hill is worth every penny. What a deep threat that guy is. … Jaylen Waddle doesn't get as much attention as Tyreek, but he's for real. … Terron Armstead was a strong investment at left tackle last season, but Austin Jackson was a liability in pass protection on the other side. … I don't think their interior line of Liam Eichenberg, Connor Williams and Robert Hunt is really good enough. … Mike McDaniel showed me a lot last year. He's a very smart coach. … The running game is rock-solid with Raheem Mostert and Jeff Wilson Jr. … Jaelan Phillips still has more upside to reach as a pass rusher. … The Dolphins are in contract talks, off and on, with Christian Wilkins. I think they're going to pay him, which makes sense. … Bradley Chubb is arguably their best defensive player overall. He's one of the best all-around front-seven players in the league. … Xavien Howard has something to prove this year. … Adding Jalen Ramsey — the rich keep getting richer. … Emmanuel Ogbah's career is declining. … Brandon Jones and Jevon Holland are one of the best safety tandems in the NFL."

KIRBY LEE/USA TODAY SPORTS

2023 DOLPHINS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS.	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
1 Tagovailoa, Tua	QB	6-1	217	3	Alabama	D1a-20	D1a-Mia-20
19 Thompson, Skylar	QB	6-2	219	1	Kansas State	D7b-22	D7b-Mia-22
14 White, Mike	QB	6-5	218	4	WKU	FA-NYJ-23	D5-Dal-18

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
26 Ahmed, Salvon	RB	5-11	197	3	Washington	W-SF-20	FA-SF-20
3 Gaskin, Myles	RB	5-10	194	4	Washington	D7b-19	D7b-Mia-19
30 Ingold, Alec	FB	6-1	235	4	Wisconsin	FA-LV-22	FA-LV-19
46 Lovett, John	FB	6-2	236	2	Princeton	FA-22	FA-KC-19
31 Mostert, Raheem	RB	5-10	205	8	Purdue	FA-SF-22	FA-Phi-15
23 Wilson Jr., Jeff	RB	6-0	213	5	North Texas	T-SF-22	FA-SF-18

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
3 Anderson, Chosen	WR	6-3	190	7	Temple	FA-Ari-23	FA-NYJ-16
0 Berrios, Braxton	WR	5-9	190	5	Miami (Fla.)	FA-NYJ-23	D6b-NE-18
80 Conner, Tanner	TE	6-3	232	1	Idaho State	FA-22	FA-Mia-22
85 Cracraft, River	WR	6-0	198	4	Washington State	FA-22	FA-Den-17
18 Ezukanma, Erik	WR	6-2	206	1	Texas Tech	D4-22	D4-Mia-22
10 Hill, Tyreek	WR	5-10	191	7	West Alabama	T-KC-22	D5b-KC-16
Kroft, Tyler	TE	6-6	252	8	Rutgers	FA-SF-23	D3-Cin-15
86 Sanders, Braylon	WR	6-1	194	1	Ole Miss	FA-22	FA-Mia-22
82 Saubert, Eric	TE	6-5	253	6	Drake	FA-Den-23	D5-Atl-17
81 Smythe, Durham	TE	6-6	246	5	Notre Dame	D4a-18	D4a-Mia-18
88 Swain, Freddie	WR	6-0	199	3	Florida	W-Den-23	D6-Sea-20
17 Waddle, Jaylen	WR	5-10	182	2	Alabama	D1a-21	D1a-Mia-21
11 Wilson Jr., Cedrick	WR	6-2	197	5	Boise State	FA-Dal-22	D6b-Dal-18

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
72 Armstead, Terron	T	6-5	305	10	Arkansas-Pine Bluff	FA-NO-22	D3a-NO-13
78 Christian, Geron	T	6-5	298	5	Louisville	W-KC-22	D3-Was-18
66 Cotton, Lester	OL	6-4	335	3	Alabama	FA-22	FA-LV-19
74 Eichenberg, Liam	OL	6-6	306	2	Notre Dame	D2b-21	D2b-Mia-21
67 Feeney, Dan	OL	6-4	310	6	Indiana	FA-NYJ-23	D3-LAC-17
68 Hunt, Robert	OL	6-6	335	3	Louisiana	D2a-20	D2a-Mia-20
73 Jackson, Austin	OL	6-5	320	3	USC	D1b-20	D1b-Mia-20
65 Jones, Robert	OL	6-4	334	2	Middle Tennessee	FA-21	FA-Mia-21
70 Lamm, Kendall	T	6-5	310	8	Appalachian State	FA-22	FA-Hou-15
76 Smith, Kion	T	6-5	311	1	Fayetteville State	FA-21	FA-Atl-21
58 Williams, Connor	OL	6-5	317	5	Texas	FA-Dal-22	D2-Dal-18

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
95 Bronson, Josiah	DT	6-3	300	2	Washington	FA-22	FA-NO-21
98 Davis, Raekwon	DT	6-7	335	3	Alabama	D2b-20	D2b-Mia-20
91 Ogbah, Emmanuel	DE	6-4	278	7	Oklahoma State	FA-KC-20	D2-Cle-16
92 Sieler, Zach	DT	6-6	305	5	Ferris State	W-Bal-19	D7-Bal-18
97 Twyman, Jaylen	DT	6-2	285	1	Pittsburgh	FA-22	D6-Min-21
94 Wilkins, Christian	DT	6-4	310	4	Clemson	D1-19	D1-Mia-19
96 Zimmer, Justin	DT	6-3	292	4	Ferris State	FA-22	FA-Buf-16

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
55 Baker, Jerome	LB	6-2	225	5	Ohio State	D3-18	D3-Mia-18
2 Chubb, Bradley	LB	6-4	275	5	NC State	T-Den-22	D1-Den-18
53 Goode, Cameron	LB	6-3	238	1	California	D7a-22	D7a-Mia-22
51 Long Jr., David	LB	5-11	227	4	West Virginia	FA-Ten-23	D6-Ten-19
15 Phillips, Jaelan	LB	6-5	263	2	Miami (Fla.)	D1b-21	D1b-Mia-21
47 Reed, Malik	LB	6-2	235	4	Nevada	FA-Pit-23	FA-Den-19
45 Riley, Duke	LB	6-1	227	6	LSU	FA-Phi-21	D3-Atl-17
41 Tindall, Channing	LB	6-2	232	1	Georgia	D3-22	D3-Mia-22
43 Van Ginkel, Andrew	LB	6-4	242	4	Wisconsin	D5-19	D5-Mia-19

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
20 Bethel, Justin	CB	6-0	200	11	Presbyterian	FA-22	D6-Ari-12
22 Campbell, Elijah	DB	5-11	195	3	Northern Iowa	W-NYJ-21	FA-Cle-18
27 Crossen, Keion	DB	5-10	176	5	Western Carolina	FA-NYG-22	D7b-NE-18
21 Elliott, DeShon	S	6-1	210	5	Texas	FA-Det-23	D6a-Bal-18
34 Ellis, Tino	CB	6-1	195	1	Maryland	FA-22	FA-NO-20
8 Holland, Jevon	S	6-1	210	2	Oregon	D2a-21	D2a-Mia-21
25 Howard, Xavien	CB	6-1	203	7	Baylor	D2-16	D2-Mia-16
9 Igbinoghene, Noah	CB	5-11	197	3	Auburn	D1c-20	D1c-Mia-20
29 Jones, Brandon	S	6-1	191	3	Texas	D3-20	D3-Mia-20
4 Kohou, Kader	CB	5-10	195	1	Texas A&M-Comm.	FA-22	FA-Mia-22
32 McKinley III, Verone	S	5-10	195	1	Oregon	FA-22	FA-Mia-22
40 Needham, Nik	CB	6-1	196	4	UTEP	FA-19	FA-Mia-19
5 Ramsey, Jalen	CB	6-1	208	7	Florida State	T-LAR-23	D1-Jac-16
6 Williams, Trill	CB	6-1	206	3	Syracuse	FA-22	FA-NO-21

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
16 Bailey, Jake	P	6-2	205	4	Stanford	FA-NE-23	D5b-NE-19
44 Ferguson, Blake	LS	6-3	240	3	LSU	D6-20	D6-Mia-20
7 Sanders, Jason	K	5-11	190	5	New Mexico	D7b-18	D7b-Mia-18

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	10	Tyreek Hill	3	Chosen Anderson
WR	17	Jaylen Waddle	0	Braxton Berrios
LT	72	Terron Armstead	70	Kendall Lamm
LG	74	Liam Eichenberg	65	Robert Jones
C	58	Connor Williams	67	Dan Feeney
RG	68	Robert Hunt	67	Dan Feeney
RT	73	Austin Jackson	78	Geron Christian
TE	81	Durham Smythe	82	Eric Saubert
QB	1	Tua Tagovailoa	14	Mike White
RB	31	Raheem Mostert	28	Devon Achane (R)
FB	30	Alec Ingold		

DEFENSE

DT	94	Christian Wilkins	92	Zach Sieler
NT	98	Raekwon Davis	96	Brandon Pili (R)
DT	92	Zach Sieler	91	Emmanuel Ogbah
OLB	2	Bradley Chubb	47	Malik Reed
ILB	55	Jerome Baker	45	Duke Riley
ILB	51	David Long Jr.	41	Channing Tindall
OLB	15	Jaelan Phillips	43	Andrew Van Ginkel
CB	5	Jalen Ramsey	24	Cam Smith (R)
CB	25	Xavien Howard	27	Keion Crossen
SS	29	Brandon Jones	21	DeShon Elliott
FS	8	Jevon Holland	32	Verone McKinley III

SPECIALISTS

K	7	Jason Sanders	KR	Devon Achane (R)
P	16	Jake Bailey	PR 0	Braxton Berrios

8.8

Tua Tagovailoa has been often criticized for throwing dump-offs, but he led the NFL in completed air yards per completion at 8.8, per Pro Football Reference. Buffalo's Josh Allen ranked second with 7.5.

DOLPHINS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: C+

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
2.	Cam Smith	CB	6-0	188	South Carolina
3.	Devon Achane	RB	5-9	185	Texas A&M
6.	Elijah Higgins	TE	6-3	228	Stanford
7.	Ryan Hayes	OT	6-7	305	Michigan

The Dolphins were limited to four picks for a second straight draft; the team lost its first-round pick in 2023 due to tampering violations. Going cornerback with their first pick was a surprise, but Dolphins had Cam Smith high on their board as a physical, versatile boundary/slot cornerback who fits well in coordinator Vic Fangio's defense. Devon Achane, who ran the fastest 40 time of all running backs at the combine — a blazing 4.32 — gives head coach Mike McDaniel another dynamic playmaker. Elijah Higgins is a big college receiver who is being converted to tight end, a position of need following the departure of Mike Gesicki. Ryan Hayes rounds out the draft as an offensive lineman with a chance to compete for a roster spot.

PATRIOTS

AFC EAST FORECAST **4**

2023 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 10	Philadelphia	4:25
Sept. 17	Miami	8:20
Sept. 24	at N.Y. Jets	1:00
Oct. 1	at Dallas	4:25
Oct. 8	New Orleans	1:00
Oct. 15	at Las Vegas	4:05
Oct. 22	Buffalo	1:00
Oct. 29	at Miami	1:00
Nov. 5	Washington	1:00
Nov. 12	Indianapolis (London)	9:30
Nov. 19	BYE	
Nov. 26	at N.Y. Giants	1:00
Dec. 3	L.A. Chargers	1:00
Dec. 7	at Pittsburgh	8:15
Dec. 18	Kansas City	8:15
Dec. 24	at Denver	8:15
Dec. 31	at Buffalo	1:00
Jan. 7	N.Y. Jets	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

THE COACHES

Head Coach: Bill Belichick
Record With Team: 262-108
Career Record: 298-152
Offensive Coordinator: Bill O'Brien
Special Teams Coordinator: Cameron Achord
Quarterbacks: Joe Judge
Running Backs: Vinnie Sunseri
Wide Receivers: Troy Brown
Tight Ends: Will Lawing
Offensive Line: Adrian Klemm
Defensive Line: DeMarcus Covington
Inside Linebackers: Jerod Mayo
Outside Linebackers: Steve Belichick
Cornerbacks: Mike Pellegrino
Safeties: Brian Belichick

It's back to the future in Foxborough. After a disjointed season that ended without a playoff invitation for the second time in three seasons, the Patriots moved quickly to bring Bill O'Brien back into the fold to help get their offense back on track.

An innovative offensive mind and quarterback guru, O'Brien will strive to design an attack to maximize QB Mac Jones' strengths: quick decision-making and elite ball placement.

O'Brien, a Josh McDaniels disciple who counts Tom Brady, Deshaun Watson, and Bryce Young among his many former charges, will be the lead voice in Jones' ear moving forward, which is something New England's offense often struggled with in the quarterback's sophomore season.

The stability and leadership O'Brien brings off the field should translate to Jones being able to play with the confidence and poise he showed during his stellar rookie campaign.

OFFENSE

Jones is the first-team quarterback, but he'll have a dog on his heels during the dog days. Bailey Zappe showed that the big stage was not too big for him during a four-game stretch last season, winning both of his starts and completing 70 percent of his passes. Zappe exuded a steely confidence and served notice that he wouldn't be satisfied being a career understudy. Jones and Zappe have a good working relationship, but that doesn't preclude them from waging a sizzling summer battle to own this offense.

Both Bill Belichick and O'Brien have indicated that every season starts with a clean slate, and every player on the roster will get a chance to earn his place.

Having a quarterback competition (not to be confused with controversy) is a good thing. It sharpens both the winner and the loser for the upcoming season. Coasting through the summer sessions is no way to prepare for the rigors of the fall.

The quarterbacks will have a revamped receiving corps to work with, as several intriguing additions arrived through free agency and the draft.

JuJu Smith-Schuster is the biggest name, and he figures to provide the biggest boost. Smith-Schuster has the ability to get open quickly from the slot, long a key to successful attacks New England has employed in the past — think back to the days of Wes Welker and Julian Edelman. Smith-Schuster also has elite post-catch skills, allowing him to gain invaluable extra yards — an area where New England has struggled.

Another important addition is Mike Gesicki, who wears a tight end label but is more of a jumbo receiver in the mold of Travis Kelce.

Those two join a group that includes receivers DeVante Parker, Tyquan Thornton and Kendrick Bourne, as well as tight end Hunter Henry — a Jones favorite.

Parker and Thornton, both entering their second year with the franchise, figure to make big leaps following a season of injuries and unfamiliarity.

This grouping will allow O'Brien to attack defenses in a variety of ways. With Smith-Schuster and Gesicki working underneath and along the seams, this should open up more room and options on deeper routes, which would benefit Parker and Thornton, who have the speed to create havoc outside the numbers.

The wild card is Bourne, who never truly seemed comfortable last season. If he can get back to his 2021 form (55 catches, 800 yards), he gives this offense a

clever chess piece who can run every route from every formation. The red-zone offense also should be improved with tree toppers Hunter, Gesicki and Parker giving Jones myriad jump-ball options.

The Patriots' ground game is in the capable hands of Rhamondre Stevenson, who rumbled for 1,040 yards in 2022. A bullish runner with sneaky shiftiness, Stevenson will dip his shoulder into defenders and deliver as much punishment as he takes. He gains a ton of yards after contact. Look for Pierre Strong Jr. to make a big second-year leap and be Stevenson's backup on early downs.

Ty Montgomery, whose 2022 was derailed by a knee injury in Week 1 after a strong camp, will battle with James Robinson for the third-down back role, which will be prominent. Stevenson caught a team-high 69 passes last season, so finding someone who can limit his touches and be effective will be critical.

The Patriots are in good shape along the offensive line, particularly on the interior, where center David Andrews, right guard Mike Onwenu and left guard Cole Strange are foundational rocks.

On the outside, Trent Brown is still one of the game's top left tackles, and and New England signed veteran Riley Reiff to stabilize the right tackle spot, which was a bit of a revolving door last season because of injuries and inconsistency.

DEFENSE

Despite losing its defensive leader, safety Devin McCourty, to retirement, this unit may not suffer a precipitous drop-off. The club replaced McCourty internally, shifting Jalen Mills from corner to a safety room that already includes emerging star Kyle Dugger and rugged veteran leaders Adrian Phillips and Jabrill Peppers.

The Patriots don't categorize their safeties as free or strong, but rather as positionless defenders whose duties vary depending on the matchup.

New England used its first-round pick on Oregon cornerback Christian Gonzalez, giving the Patriots the bigger perimeter defender they need to battle some of the larger receivers in the AFC. The Patriots' other corners (Jonathan Jones, Jack Jones, Marcus Jones and Myles Bryant) are shorter in stature but possess excellent quickness and instincts.

The front seven is loaded with pass rushers led by Matthew Judon, Josh Uche and Deatrich Wise Jr. Second-round pick Keion White should fit nicely into the edge mix, allowing fresh bodies to continually rotate in.

In the middle, pencil in linebacker Ja'Whaun Bentley (he of the elite pre-snap recognition skills) for 100-plus tackles. Bentley, along with Jahlani Tavai, clean up ball-carriers who have been redirected by interior linemen Davon Godchaux and Christian Barmore.

Assistant coaches Jerod Mayo and Steve Belichick are very creative with a group that is too flexible to identify as either a true 3-4 or 4-3.

SPECIALISTS

Marcus Jones emerged as one of the most electrifying returners in the game, a bright spot in a rough year for a team that prides itself on fielding elite special teams.

Look for coach Joe Judge to lend his expertise in this area to help clean up some of the sloppiness, particularly on the coverage units.

The Patriots drafted their punter (Bryce Baringer) and kicker (Chad Ryland) of the future, though don't count out veteran Nick Folk, who has been a field-goal machine (108-of-121) in his four seasons in Foxborough.

FINAL ANALYSIS

It's all about the quarterback position for the Patriots; this is the critical season for Mac Jones' future in Foxborough. The third-year quarterback needs to display the crisp play and calmness that made him a Pro Bowler during his rookie season. The bad body language and sideline histrionics of last year must be shelved in favor of maturity and leadership. Players need to be able to go to their quarterback for guidance. They need to know Jones can point the way to victory, not point fingers when the chips are down.

MARK KONEZNY-USA TODAY SPORTS

2022 RESULTS (8-9)

Sept.	11	at Miami	L	7-20
Sept.	18	at Pittsburgh	W	17-14
Sept.	25	Baltimore	L	26-37
Oct.	2	at Green Bay (ot)	L	24-27
Oct.	9	Detroit	W	29-0
Oct.	16	at Cleveland	W	38-15
Oct.	24	Chicago	L	14-33
Oct.	30	at N.Y. Jets	W	22-17
Nov.	6	Indianapolis	W	26-3
Nov.	20	N.Y. Jets	W	10-3
Nov.	24	at Minnesota	L	26-33
Dec.	1	Buffalo	L	10-24
Dec.	12	at Arizona	W	27-13
Dec.	18	at Las Vegas	L	24-30
Dec.	24	Cincinnati	L	18-22
Jan.	1	Miami	W	23-21
Jan.	8	at Buffalo	L	23-35

2022 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	314.6	26	13
Rushing	106.6	24	11
Passing	208.0	20	10
Scoring	21.4	17	8
Third Down %	34.9	27	12
EPA/Play	-0.047	24	12
TO Differential	+7	T4	1

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	322.0	8	4
Rushing	105.5	6	5
Passing	216.5	16	8
Scoring	20.4	10	5
Interceptions	19	3	2
Sacks	54	T3	2
EPA/Play	-0.085	3	1

2022 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Mac Jones	442	288	2,997	14	11
Bailey Zappe	92	65	781	5	3

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Rhamondre Stevenson	210	1,040	5.0	5
Damien Harris	106	462	4.4	3

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Rhamondre Stevenson	69	421	6.1	1
Jakobi Meyers	67	804	12.0	6
Hunter Henry	41	509	12.4	2
Kendrick Bourne	35	434	12.4	1
Nelson Agholor	31	362	11.7	2
DeVante Parker	31	539	17.4	3

KICKING: Nick Folk, 32-37 FGs, 32-35 PAT, 128 points
TACKLES: Ja'Whaun Bentley, 125; Kyle Dugger, 78
SACKS: Matthew Judon, 15.5; Josh Uche, 11.5
INTERCEPTIONS: Jonathan Jones, 4; Devin McCourty, 4

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

ATHLETES FIRST First-round pick Christian Gonzalez comes from a ridiculously athletic family. His father, Hector, was a 6-foot-9 basketball player at UTEP. His sister, Melissa, competed at the Tokyo Olympics (400 meters) for Colombia, and another sister, Samantha, ran track for four seasons at Miami (Fla.).

SACK LUNCH The 15.5 sacks that **Matthew Judon** produced in 2022 were the third most in a season in franchise history, trailing only Hall of Famer Andre Tippett, who had 18.5 in 1984 and 16.5 in 1985. Judon has 28 sacks in 34 career games with New England.

GAMERS Draftees Sidy Sow and Chad Ryland were teammates at Eastern Michigan (before Ryland transferred to Maryland), and they remain close. "[Chad is] going to be one of the best kickers in the NFL," Sow says. "We're big Call of Duty partners, and it's crazy that once again, we're teammates."

IN THE CARDS The Patriots passed on quarterbacks in the draft but quickly signed Louisville's Malik Cunningham as a UDFA, giving him $200,000 in contract guarantees. Cunningham could be used in a variety of roles in New England, from scout-team QB to offensive chess piece as a passer, rusher and receiver.

PRIME TIME Isaiah Bolden (seventh round) was the lone player drafted from an HBCU (Jackson State) and says he's carrying the weight of all the players from those schools. "There's a lot of talented guys out there," he says.

SWEET 16 Perennial Pro Bowler Matthew Slater is returning for his 16th season. The special teams ace will help guide the revamped coverage units, which suffered from late-season breakdowns. The Patriots brought in some experience (Chris Board) and made special teams a priority in the draft.

SCOUTING THE PATRIOTS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP NEW ENGLAND "Succession plans in New England are being crafted, but there's still no expiration date on Bill Belichick. Jerod Mayo has something of a head-coach-in-waiting status, though. … Belichick acknowledged through his actions that it was a mistake to have Matt Patricia and Joe Judge running the offense. Now, he's got a real offensive coordinator in Bill O'Brien. O'Brien has a gruff approach, but that may mesh well with Mac Jones after playing for Nick Saban at Alabama. … JuJu Smith-Schuster more than upgrades the slot position over Jakobi Meyers, who had a rough ending with the Patriots with his gaffe against Las Vegas. … The Patriots are taking another swing at the tight end position with Mike Gesicki. He's a better fit for O'Brien's offense even though he's not much of a blocker. He can catch the football very well and consistently gets open. … Tyquan Thornton is a prime example of how much the Patriots overdraft players. No one else had that high a grade on him or Cole Strange. … I think the Riley Reiff signing is going to work out. … Mac Jones is at something of an early crossroads. He has to play better this year to keep the starting job. He needs to trust what he's seeing and deliver the football on time. … Rhamondre Stevenson is someone linebackers dread tackling. … Matthew Judon is practically unblockable. The scouting report on him for quarterbacks: Watch your back. … Christian Gonzalez is a smooth cornerback. He's going to be the best corner they've had in years. … I think Keion White will be on the field very quickly with the first-string defense."

JEFFREY BECKER/USA TODAY SPORTS

2023 PATRIOTS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS.	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
10 Jones, Mac	QB	6-3	214	2	Alabama	D1-21	D1-NE-21
19 McSorley, Trace	QB	6-0	202	3	Penn State	FA-23	D6-Bal-19
4 Zappe, Bailey	QB	6-1	220	1	WKU	D4c-22	D4c-NE-22
RUNNING BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
36 Harris, Kevin	RB	5-10	225	1	South Carolina	D6a-22	D6a-NE-22
3 Robinson, James	RB	5-9	219	3	Illinois State	FA-NYJ-23	FA-Jac-20
38 Stevenson, Rhamondre	RB	6-0	230	2	Oklahoma	D4-21	D4-NE-21
35 Strong Jr., Pierre	RB	5-11	205	1	South Dakota St.	D4b-22	D4b-NE-22
42 Taylor, J.J.	RB	5-6	185	3	Arizona	FA-20	FA-NE-20
RECEIVERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
84 Bourne, Kendrick	WR	6-1	190	6	E. Washington	FA-SF-21	FA-SF-17
86 Bowden Jr., Lynn	WR	6-1	203	3	Kentucky	FA-22	D3-LV-20
88 Gesicki, Mike	TE	6-6	250	5	Penn State	FA-Mia-23	D2-Mia-18
85 Henry, Hunter	TE	6-5	250	7	Arkansas	FA-LAC-21	D2-LAC-16
16 Meyers, Jakobi	WR	6-2	200	4	NC State	FA-19	FA-NE-19
14 Montgomery II, Ty	WR	6-0	216	8	Stanford	FA-NO-22	D3-GB-15
82 Nixon, Tre	WR	6-2	180	1	UCF	D7-21	D7-NE-21
1 Parker, DeVante	WR	6-3	219	8	Louisville	T-Mia-22	D1-Mia-15
18 Slater, Matthew	WR	6-0	205	15	UCLA	D5-08	D5-NE-08
7 Smith-Schuster, JuJu	WR	6-1	215	6	USC	FA-KC-23	D2-Pit-17
87 Sokol, Matt	TE	6-5	249	1	Michigan State	W-Det-22	FA-LAC-19
11 Thornton, Tyquan	WR	6-2	182	1	Baylor	D2-22	D2-NE-22
17 Washington, Scotty	TE	6-5	247	1	Wake Forest	FA-22	FA-Cin-20
44 Webb, Raleigh	WR	6-2	204	1	The Citadel	FA-22	FA-Bal-22
OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
76 Anderson, Calvin	OL	6-5	300	4	Texas	FA-Den-23	FA-NE-19
60 Andrews, David	OL	6-3	300	8	Georgia	FA-15	FA-NE-15
77 Brown, Trent	OL	6-8	370	8	Florida	T-LV-21	D7a-SF-15
72 Cajuste, Yodny	OL	6-5	310	4	West Virginia	D3c-19	D3c-NE-19
65 Ferentz, James	OL	6-2	300	7	Iowa	FA-17	FA-Hou-14
63 Hines, Chasen	OL	6-3	330	1	LSU	D6c-22	D6c-NE-22
75 McDermott, Conor	OL	6-8	310	6	UCLA	FA-22	D6-NE-17
62 Murray, Bill	OL	6-4	265	1	William & Mary	FA-20	FA-NE-20
71 Onwenu, Mike	OL	6-3	350	3	Michigan	D6a-20	D6a-NE-20
74 Reiff, Riley	OL	6-6	305	11	Iowa	FA-Chi-23	D1-Det-12
66 Russey, Kody	OL	6-2	300	1	Houston	FA-22	FA-NE-22
69 Strange, Cole	OL	6-5	305	1	Chattanooga	D1-22	D1-NE-22
64 Stueber, Andrew	OL	6-6	325	1	Michigan	D7-22	D7-NE-22
DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
90 Barmore, Christian	DL	6-5	310	2	Alabama	D2-21	D2-NE-21
95 Ekuale, Daniel	DL	6-3	305	4	Washington State	FA-22	FA-Cle-18
92 Godchaux, Davon	DL	6-3	311	6	LSU	FA-Mia-21	D5b-Mia-17
93 Guy Sr., Lawrence	DL	6-4	315	12	Arizona State	FA-Bal-17	D7-GB-11
97 Mitchell, DaMarcus	DL	6-3	260	1	Purdue	FA-22	FA-NE-22
62 Murray, Bill	DL	6-4	265	1	William & Mary	FA-23	FA-NE-20
70 Pharms Jr., Jeremiah	DL	6-3	275	1	Friends	FA-22	FA-NE-22
96 Roberts, Sam	DL	6-5	295	1	NW Missouri State	D6b-22	D6b-NE-22
91 Wise Jr., Deatrich	DL	6-5	275	6	Arkansas	D4-17	D4-NE-17
LINEBACKERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
8 Bentley, Ja'Whaun	LB	6-2	244	5	Purdue	D5-18	D5-NE-18
45 Board, Chris	LB	6-2	239	5	North Dakota St.	FA-Det-23	FA-Bal-18
47 Fatukasi, Olakunle	LB	6-2	240	1	Rutgers	FA-23	FA-TB-22
59 Hall, Terez	LB	6-2	235	3	Missouri	FA-22	FA-NE-19
58 Jennings, Anfernee	LB	6-3	259	3	Alabama	D3a-20	D3a-NE-20
9 Judon, Matthew	LB	6-3	261	7	Grand Valley State	FA-Bal-21	D5-Bal-16
50 McMillan, Raekwon	LB	6-2	242	6	Ohio State	FA-LV-21	D2-Mia-17
43 Munson, Calvin	LB	6-1	235	4	San Diego State	FA-22	FA-NYG-17
51 Perkins, Ronnie	LB	6-3	253	2	Oklahoma	D3-21	D3-NE-21
48 Tavai, Jahlani	LB	6-2	246	4	Hawai'i	FA-21	D2-Det-19
55 Uche, Josh	LB	6-3	245	3	Michigan	D2b-20	D2b-NE-20
30 Wilson Sr., Mack	LB	6-1	233	4	Alabama	T-Cle-22	D5a-Cle-19
DEFENSIVE BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
24 Bledsoe, Joshuah	DB	5-11	201	2	Missouri	D6a-21	D6a-NE-21
27 Bryant, Myles	DB	5-9	185	3	Washington	FA-20	FA-NE-20
22 Davis, Cody	DB	6-2	203	10	Texas Tech	FA-Jac-20	FA-LAR-13
23 Dugger, Kyle	DB	6-2	220	3	Lenoir-Rhyne	D2a-20	D2a-NE-20
Hayes, Tae	DB	5-9	190	3	App State	FA-23	FA-Jac-19
29 Hawkins, Brad	DB	6-1	221	1	Michigan	FA-22	FA-Atl-22
13 Jones, Jack	DB	5-11	175	1	Arizona State	D4a-22	D4a-NE-22
31 Jones, Jonathan	DB	5-10	190	7	Auburn	FA-16	FA-NE-16
25 Jones, Marcus	DB	5-8	175	1	Houston	D3-22	D3-NE-22
2 Mills, Jalen	DB	6-0	191	7	LSU	FA-Phi-21	D7a-Phi-16
34 Mosely, Quandre	DB	6-1	195	1	Kentucky	FA-22	FA-Dal-22
5 Peppers, Jabrill	DB	5-11	215	6	Michigan	FA-NYG-22	D1b-Cle-17
21 Phillips, Adrian	DB	5-11	210	9	Texas	FA-LAC-20	FA-LAC-14
39 Randle Jr., Rodney	DB	5-9	184	1	Lamar	FA-23	FA-LAC-19
41 Schooler, Brenden	DB	6-1	205	1	Texas	FA-22	FA-NE-22
26 Wade, Shaun	DB	6-1	191	2	Ohio State	T-Bal-21	D5-Bal-21
SPECIALISTS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
46 Addington, Tucker	LS	6-2	230	1	Sam Houston	FA-22	FA-Dal-22
49 Cardona, Joe	LS	6-3	245	8	Navy	D5-15	D5-NE-15
6 Folk, Nick	K	6-1	222	15	Arizona	FA-20	D6-Dal-07
15 Waitman, Corliss	P	6-2	210	2	South Alabama	FA-Den-23	FA-Pit-20

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	1	DeVante Parker	84	Kendrick Bourne
WR	11	Tyquan Thornton		Demario Douglas (R)
WR	7	JuJu Smith-Schuster		Kayshon Boutte (R)
LT	77	Trent Brown	76	Calvin Anderson
LG	69	Cole Strange		Sidy Sow (R)
C	60	David Andrews		Jake Andrews (R)
RG	71	Mike Onwenu		Atonio Mafi (R)
RT	74	Riley Reiff	75	Conor McDermott
TE	85	Hunter Henry	88	Mike Gesicki
QB	10	Mac Jones	4	Bailey Zappe
RB	38	Rhamondre Stevenson	3	James Robinson

DEFENSE

DE	91	Deatrich Wise Jr.		Keion White (R)
NT	92	Davon Godchaux	93	Lawrence Guy Sr.
DT	90	Christian Barmore	95	Daniel Ekuale
LB	9	Matthew Judon	55	Josh Uche
LB	8	Ja'Whaun Bentley	50	Raekwon McMillan
LB	48	Jahlani Tavai		Marte Mapu (R)
CB		Christian Gonzalez (R)	26	Shaun Wade
CB	13	Jack Jones	25	Marcus Jones
NB	31	Jonathan Jones	27	Myles Bryant
SS	21	Adrian Phillips	2	Jalen Mills
FS	23	Kyle Dugger	5	Jabrill Peppers

SPECIALISTS

K	Chad Ryland (R)	KR		Demario Douglas (R)
P	Bryce Baringer (R)	PR	25	Marcus Jones

42.2

The Patriots struggled offensively in 2022 largely because they had the worst red zone conversion rate in football at 42.2 percent.

PATRIOTS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B+

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1	Christian Gonzalez	CB	6-2	201	Oregon
2.	Keion White	DE	6-5	285	Georgia Tech
3.	Marte Mapu	S	6-3	216	Sacramento State
4.	Jake Andrews	C	6-3	305	Troy
4.	Chad Ryland	K	6-0	183	Maryland
4.	Sidy Sow	G/T	6-5	326	Eastern Michigan
5.	Atonio Mafi	G	6-3	329	UCLA
6.	Kayshon Boutte	WR	6-0	195	LSU
6.	Bryce Baringer	P	6-3	215	Michigan State
6.	Demario Douglas	WR	5-8	170	Liberty
6.	Ameer Speed	CB	6-3	209	Michigan State
7.	Isaiah Bolden	DB	6-2	205	Jackson State

The Patriots nabbed the top corner on their board in Christian Gonzalez, a bigger defender who can stay on the hip pockets of some of the lengthier receivers in the AFC East. The club added a second plug-and-play defender in Keion White, whom many projected as a first rounder. The Patriots also added depth in the event three of their top pending free agents (safety Kyle Dugger, edge rusher Josh Uche and right guard Mike Onwenu) leave at season's end. Kayshon Boutte might be the steal of the draft after falling into the sixth round.

NY JETS

AFC EAST FORECAST **3**

2023 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 11	Buffalo	8:15
Sept. 17	at Dallas	4:25
Sept. 24	New England	1:00
Oct. 1	Kansas City	8:20
Oct. 8	at Denver	4:25
Oct. 15	Philadelphia	4:25
Oct. 22	BYE	
Oct. 29	at New York Giants	1:00
Nov. 6	L.A. Chargers	8:15
Nov. 12	at Las Vegas	8:20
Nov. 19	at Buffalo	4:25
Nov. 24	Miami	3:00
Dec. 3	Atlanta	1:00
Dec. 10	Houston	1:00
Dec. 17	at Miami	1:00
Dec. 24	Washington	1:00
Dec. 28	at Cleveland	8:15
Jan. 7	at New England	1:00

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

THE COACHES

Head Coach: Robert Saleh
Record With Team: 11-23
Career Record: 11-23
Offensive Coordinator: Nathaniel Hackett
Defensive Coordinator: Jeff Ulbrich
Special Teams Coordinator: Brant Boyer
Quarterbacks: Rob Calabrese
Running Backs: Taylor Embree
Wide Receivers: Zach Azzanni
Tight Ends: Ron Middleton
Offensive Line/Run Game Coordinator: Keith Carter
Passing Game Coordinator: Todd Downing
Defensive Line: Aaron Whitecotton
Linebackers: Mike Rutenberg
Senior Defensive Assistant/Cornerbacks: Tony Oden
Defensive Backs/Safeties: Marquand Manuel

Is Aaron Rodgers finally the one? For years, the Jets have sought the next Joe Namath — which is to say, a franchise quarterback who can lead them back to the Super Bowl for the first time since the 1968 season.

And now, with a ready-to-win roster, general manager Joe Douglas and head coach Robert Saleh are hitching their hopes — and job security — to the 39-year-old Rodgers, a future Hall of Famer acquired in a blockbuster trade with the Packers.

Will it work?

Realistically, the Jets have a two-year window with Rodgers. It won't be enough that they reach the playoffs for the first time since 2010 — the longest current drought in the four biggest North American pro sports. For the Rodgers trade to work, the Jets must become legit Super Bowl contenders.

If that sounds crazy, you hadn't noticed enough about how good this Jets roster had become — well, outside of quarterback. But now, Rodgers provides stability and security under center, presuming he can rebound from last season's uncharacteristically uneven performance.

Fifty-five years ago, Namath cemented his legacy by helping the Jets shock the Baltimore Colts in Super Bowl III. Rodgers' legacy is already secure. But if Rodgers — who has just one Super Bowl ring — delivers the Jets their second championship, he'll become a New York legend.

OFFENSE

Rodgers can't do it all himself. But his weapons probably won't be a problem. The Jets have a fascinating collection of wide receivers, led by Garrett Wilson, the reigning Offensive Rookie of the Year. Douglas signed Rodgers' old Packers pals Allen Lazard and Randall Cobb, partly due to the fact that Corey Davis has underwhelmed.

It'll be fascinating to see how running back Breece Hall — a dynamic rookie last year — returns from a torn ACL he suffered in October. Rodgers badly needs him to keep defenses off balance.

For all the glitz at the Jets' skill positions, they do have some legitimate concerns on the offensive line — as usual. They might start a rookie center, second-round draft pick Joe Tippmann, if he can beat out incumbent Connor McGovern. Left tackle Duane Brown will be 38 when the season begins — and he is coming off offseason shoulder surgery. Right tackle Mekhi Becton (the No. 11 overall pick in 2020) has had major durability issues the past two years. He played one game in 2021 and zero last year. So, yeah, there are reasons to be worried about this line.

Despite quarterback Zach Wilson's failures the past two seasons — after being the No. 2 overall pick in 2021 — he did provide an element of mobility. Rodgers does not have that at this stage of his career. The Jets desperately need to protect him — and you have to wonder about the state of their offensive tackle positions. Will Douglas regret not making a high-profile addition there? Well, he might have drafted an offensive tackle, but he traded down from No. 13 to No. 15 as a result of the Rodgers deal. By the time Douglas picked, the top four tackles were gone — including Broderick Jones at No. 14.

DEFENSE

Saleh has built a dominant defense during his tenure. The Jets finished second in Pro Football Focus' defensive ratings last season — up from No. 31 in 2021,

Saleh's first year on the job. (The Jets were No. 26 and No. 31 in offense those two years, respectively.) All the pieces are in place for a repeat of 2022 for this defense.

Cornerback Sauce Gardner, the reigning Defensive Rookie of the Year, looks like a truly special player. He was a first-team All-Pro selection last year — the first rookie corner to accomplish that since Hall of Famer Ronnie Lott in 1981.

The Jets' recipe for defensive success is not complicated. They do the two most important things in today's NFL: excel in coverage and rush the passer. PFF rated the Jets third in both categories last year.

Tackle Quinnen Williams gets a lot of recognition, and he did lead the Jets with 52 pressures last year. But edge rushers John Franklin-Myers and Carl Lawson were right behind him (51 and 49, respectively).

And even though Gardner proved himself as a shutdown corner last season, don't overlook D.J. Reed on the other side. Gardner was first among corners in PFF's coverage ratings, while Reed ranked eighth.

One position to watch happens to be in the secondary. Incumbent free safety Jordan Whitehead doesn't have his starting job locked down. He struggled last season and will be challenged in training camp by Tony Adams (an undrafted rookie last year) — or maybe a late-offseason veteran addition.

SPECIALISTS

The Jets cut punter Braden Mann and replaced him with Thomas Morstead. After three years of instability, the Jets last season found a reliable placekicking option in veteran Greg Zuerlein, who re-signed this offseason.

Douglas signed the Chiefs' Mecole Hardman Jr. in free agency, and while he's a capable slot receiver, his more appealing trait might be his fascinating returner potential — considering how he excelled in that area earlier in his career (2019-20).

The Jets were a middle-of-the-pack special teams group in 2022, when they finished No. 15 in PFF's ratings. Hardman has a chance to help upgrade that.

DANIELLE PARHIZKARAN/NORTHJERSEY.COM

FINAL ANALYSIS

If the Jets fail to make the playoffs — presuming that Rodgers stays healthy — there's a good chance that both Saleh and Douglas will get fired. Saleh is under contract through 2025, Douglas through 2024. So their buyouts would not be unreasonable.

And if the Rodgers-led Jets somehow miss the playoffs, dual firings would be well-deserved. Because that would be a shockingly disappointing result — for a franchise that has experienced so many shocking disappointments, especially during this current playoff drought.

The finish to last season provided one of the worst gut punches of the 12-year drought. The Jets started 5-2, then 6-3, then 7-4. And then they collapsed, losing six straight games to finish the season.

Finally, the Jets were playing meaningful games in December for a change. That was Douglas' publicly stated goal before the season. The only problem: They lost all of those meaningful games.

But things feel different around this franchise now, especially with Rodgers onboard as a much-needed replacement for Wilson, who looked in over his head last season and lost the locker room.

Will a different, more hopeful feeling lead to improved late-season results? If it does, long-suffering Jets fans — are there any other kind? — might just forever remember Rodgers as the guy who finally allowed them to forget those three words they hate: Same Old Jets.

2022 RESULTS (7-10)

Sept. 11	Baltimore	L	9-24
Sept. 18	at Cleveland	W	31-30
Sept. 25	Cincinnati	L	12-27
Oct. 2	at Pittsburgh	W	24-20
Oct. 9	Miami	W	40-17
Oct. 16	at Green Bay	W	27-10
Oct. 23	at Denver	W	16-9
Oct. 30	New England	L	17-22
Nov. 6	Buffalo	W	20-17
Nov. 20	at New England	L	3-10
Nov. 27	Chicago	W	31-10
Dec. 4	at Minnesota	L	22-27
Dec. 11	at Buffalo	L	12-20
Dec. 18	Detroit	L	17-20
Dec. 22	Jacksonville	L	3-19
Jan. 1	at Seattle	L	6-23
Jan. 8	at Miami	L	6-11

2022 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	318.2	25	12
Rushing	99.2	T25	T12
Passing	219.0	15	8
Scoring	17.4	29	13
Third Down %	34.6	28	13
EPA/Play	-0.086	30	14
TO Differential	-7	T28	T14

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	311.1	4	1
Rushing	121.6	T16	11
Passing	189.4	3	1
Scoring	18.6	4	3
Interceptions	12	T19	11
Sacks	45	T7	4
EPA/Play	-0.045	6	2

2022 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Zach Wilson	242	132	1,688	6	7
Mike White	175	103	1,192	3	4
Joe Flacco	191	110	1,051	5	3

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Breece Hall	80	463	5.8	4
Michael Carter	114	402	3.5	3
Zonovan Knight	85	300	3.5	1

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Garrett Wilson	83	1,103	13.3	4
Tyler Conklin	58	552	9.5	3
Michael Carter	41	288	7.0	0
Elijah Moore	37	446	12.1	1

KICKING: Greg Zuerlein, 30-37 FGs, 28-29 PAT, 118 points
TACKLES: C.J. Mosley, 158; Quincy Williams, 106
SACKS: Quinnen Williams, 12.0; Carl Lawson, 7.0
INTERCEPTIONS: Lamarcus Joyner, 3; three tied with 2

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

EMBRACING THE SPOTLIGHT **Aaron Rodgers** wasted no time getting to know his new teammates. In recent years with the Packers, he skipped voluntary spring workouts. Not only did he participate in those workouts with the Jets, but he also attended a Rangers vs. Devils NHL playoff game at Madison Square Garden with four teammates, including Lazard, Hall and McGovern. The next day, Rodgers was back at the Garden for Heat-Knicks in the NBA playoffs.

JUMPING AT HIS CHANCE The Jets drafted edge rusher Will McDonald IV at No. 15. He is an athletic freak. So much so that video circulated on social media, shortly after he was drafted, of him leaping over an SUV in a parking lot. Obviously, McDonald will not be doing that anymore. He says he is officially "retired from jumping over cars," adding, "The next thing I'm going to be jumping over is just tackles — so that's it."

PARTY IN THE BACK The Jets have a new mullet in their locker room. Offensive guard Dan Feeney, who sported a mullet, spent two seasons with the Jets before signing with the Dolphins this offseason. Joe Douglas promptly drafted another epic mullet — in the form of second-round center Joe Tippmann, who played at Wisconsin. Douglas made a point of raving to reporters about Tippmann's mullet. "Fired up to add big Joe to the team and his Wisconsin waterfall," Douglas said. "Probably the best mullet in the draft right now."

FRIED CHEESE How badly did Sauce Gardner want Aaron Rodgers to join the Jets? Well, after the Jets stunned the Packers at Lambeau Field last season, Gardner preened around while wearing a cheesehead hat. Gardner brought it home with him, too. Then, this offseason, he promised he would burn the cheesehead if the Jets traded for Rodgers. And Gardner made good on his promise, even capturing the moment on video, as he stood with teammates Breece Hall and Garrett Wilson.

SCOUTING THE JETS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP NEW YORK "There's excitement in Gotham with Aaron Rodgers' arrival. For at least this year, maybe two, they've got an outstanding quarterback. A lot of extra comes with this guy, but he's one of the best quarterbacks to play the game in the past two decades. They've got instant stability under center now. Rodgers throwing to Garrett Wilson, Allen Lazard and Mecole Hardman Jr. should be extremely productive. … Wilson is a special route-runner. … Lazard has the size, speed and chemistry with Rodgers that should lead to some touchdowns. … Hardman wasn't consistent enough in Kansas City. He's got to get into the playbook and put in the time in New York. … When Breece Hall got hurt, the Jets lost something special. Hall's comeback from injury should provide a huge boost to the offense. … It's understandable that the Jets didn't pick up the fifth-year club option for Mekhi Becton. Whether it's his weight or his knee, it's always something with this guy. … General manager Joe Douglas, with the exception of the Zach Wilson pick, is on a roll drafting. He had the NFL Defensive Rookie of the Year and Offensive Rookie of the Year last season. …. Sauce Gardner will continue to be the lockdown corner in his second NFL season. The guy's confidence and personality are infectious. … C.J. Mosley is playing the way he did with the Ravens. … Quinnen Williams is earning a huge payday. … Their two edge rushers, John Franklin-Myers and Carl Lawson, have a great burst at the line of scrimmage."

BRAD PENNER/USA TODAY SPORTS

2023 JETS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS.	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
7 Boyle, Tim	QB	6-4	227	4	Eastern Kentucky	FA-23	FA-GB-18
8 Rodgers, Aaron	QB	6-2	225	18	California	T-GB-23	D1-GB-05
15 Streveler, Chris	QB	6-1	216	3	South Dakota	FA-22	FA-Ari-20
2 Wilson, Zach	QB	6-2	214	2	BYU	D1a-21	D1a-NYJ-21

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
48 Bawden, Nick	FB	6-2	245	5	San Diego State	FA-21	D7-Det-18
32 Carter, Michael	RB	5-8	201	2	North Carolina	D4-21	D4-NYJ-21
20 Hall, Breece	RB	5-11	217	1	Iowa State	D2-22	D2-NYJ-22
25 Johnson, Ty	RB	5-10	210	4	Maryland	W-Det-20	D6b-Det-19
27 Knight, Zonovan	RB	5-11	209	1	NC State	FA-22	FA-NYJ-22

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
82 Charles, Irvin	WR	6-4	219	1	Indiana (PA)	FA-22	FA-NYJ-22
18 Cobb, Randall	WR	5-10	192	12	Kentucky	FA-GB-23	D2-GB-11
83 Conklin, Tyler	TE	6-3	248	5	Central Michigan	FA-Min-22	D5a-Min-18
84 Davis, Corey	WR	6-3	209	6	Western Michigan	FA-Ten-21	D1a-Ten-17
6 Hardman Jr., Mecole	WR	5-10	187	4	Georgia	FA-KC-23	D2a-KC-19
10 Lazard, Allen	WR	6-5	227	4	Iowa State	FA-GB-23	FA-Jac-18
11 Mims, Denzel	WR	6-3	207	3	Baylor	D2-20	D2-NYJ-20
89 Ruckert, Jeremy	TE	6-5	250	1	Ohio State	D3-22	D3-NYJ-22
14 Spencer, Diontae	WR	5-8	170	4	McNeese State	FA-22	FA-LAR-14
86 Taylor, Malik	WR	6-1	220	2	Ferris State	FA-22	FA-TB-19
87 Uzomah, C.J.	TE	6-6	260	8	Auburn	FA-Cin-22	D5-Cin-15
17 Wilson, Garrett	WR	6-0	183	1	Ohio State	D1b-22	D1b-NYJ-22
88 Yeboah, Kenny	TE	6-4	250	2	Ole Miss	FA-21	FA-NYJ-21

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
77 Becton, Mekhi	T	6-7	363	3	Louisville	D1-20	D1-NYJ-20
76 Brown, Duane	T	6-4	315	15	Virginia Tech	FA-22	D1-Hou-08
65 Colon, Trystan	C/G	6-3	320	3	Missouri	FA-Bal-23	FA-Bal-20
64 Glaser, Chris	OL	6-4	306	1	Virginia	FA-22	FA-KC-22
60 McGovern, Connor	C	6-4	306	7	Missouri	FA-Den-20	D5-Den-16
61 Mitchell, Max	OL	6-6	307	1	Louisiana	D4a-22	D4a-NYJ-22
70 Ogbuehi, Cedric	OL	6-5	308	8	Texas A&M	FA-22	D1-Cin-15
62 Pankey, Adam	OL	6-5	307	4	West Virginia	FA-22	FA-GB-17
71 Schweitzer, Wes	C/G	6-4	300	7	San José State	FA-Was-23	D6-Atl-16
69 Smith, Eric	OL	6-4	308	4	Virginia	FA-22	FA-Mia-17
78 Tomlinson, Laken	G	6-3	315	8	Duke	FA-SF-22	D1-Det-15
54 Turner, Billy	OL	6-5	310	9	North Dakota St.	FA-Den-23	D3-Mia-14
75 Vera-Tucker, Alijah	G	6-5	308	2	USC	D1b-21	D1b-NYJ-21

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
50 Anae, Bradlee	DL	6-3	260	3	Utah	FA-21	D5-Dal-20
72 Clemons, Micheal	DL	6-5	263	1	Texas A&M	D4b-22	D4b-NYJ-22
91 Franklin-Myers, John	DL	6-4	288	5	Stephen F. Austin	W-LAR-19	D4-LAR-18
47 Huff, Bryce	DL	6-3	255	3	Memphis	FA-20	FA-NYJ-20
93 Jefferson, Quinton	DL	6-4	291	7	Maryland	FA-Sea-23	D5a-Sea-16
58 Lawson, Carl	DL	6-2	265	6	Auburn	FA-Cin-21	D4a-Cin-17
97 Mack, Isaiah	DT	6-1	311	4	Chattanooga	W-Sea-23	FA-Ten-19
79 Smart, Tanzel	DL	6-1	295	4	Tulane	FA-20	D6-LAR-17
51 Spencer, Marquiss	DL	6-4	300	1	Mississippi State	FA-22	D7-Den-21
94 Thomas, Solomon	DL	6-3	295	6	Stanford	FA-LV-22	D1a-SF-17
95 Williams, Quinnen	DL	6-3	303	4	Alabama	D1-19	D1-NYJ-19
Woods, Al	DT	6-3	330	12	LSU	FA-Sea-23	D4-NO-10

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
52 Johnson, Jermaine	LB	6-5	254	1	Florida State	D1c-22	D1c-NYJ-22
57 Mosley, C.J.	LB	6-2	231	8	Alabama	FA-Bal-19	D1-Bal-14
45 Nasirildeen, Hamsah	LB	6-3	215	2	Florida State	D6a-21	D6a-NYJ-21
44 Sherwood, Jamien	LB	6-2	216	2	Auburn	D5a-21	D5a-NYJ-21
55 Surratt, Chazz	LB	6-2	233	2	North Carolina	FA-22	D3-Min-21
56 Williams, Quincy	LB	5-11	230	4	Murray State	W-Jac-21	D3-Jac-19

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
22 Adams, Tony	S	5-11	203	1	Illinois	FA-22	FA-NYJ-22
30 Carter II, Michael	CB	5-10	184	2	Duke	D5b-21	D5b-NYJ-21
23 Clark, Chuck	S	6-0	209	6	Virginia Tech	T-Bal-23	D6-Bal-17
21 Davis, Ashtyn	S	6-1	202	3	California	D3a-20	D3a-NYJ-20
26 Echols, Brandin	CB	5-10	179	2	Kentucky	D6b-21	D6b-NYJ-21
1 Gardner, Sauce	CB	6-3	190	1	Cincinnati	D1a-22	D1a-NYJ-22
37 Hall, Bryce	CB	6-1	202	3	Virginia	D5-20	D5-NYJ-20
34 Hardee, Justin	CB	6-1	200	6	Illinois	FA-NO-21	FA-Hou-17
31 James, Craig	S	5-10	195	4	Southern Illinois	FA-22	FA-Min-18
33 Moreland, Jimmy	CB	5-11	182	4	James Madison	FA-22	D7-Was-19
39 Parks, Will	S	6-0	200	7	Arizona	W-Mia-21	D6-Den-16
4 Reed, D.J.	CB	5-9	193	5	Kansas State	FA-Sea-22	D5-SF-18
3 Whitehead, Jordan	S	5-10	198	5	Pittsburgh	FA-TB-22	D4-TB-18

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
42 Hennessy, Thomas	LS	6-2	246	6	Duke	T-Ind-17	FA-Ind-17
5 Morstead, Thomas	P	6-4	225	14	SMU	FA-Mia-23	D5-NO-09
9 Zuerlein, Greg	K	6-0	195	11	Missouri Western	FA-Dal-22	D6-LAR-12

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	17	Garrett Wilson	84	Corey Davis
WR	10	Allen Lazard	11	Denzel Mims
WR	6	Mecole Hardman Jr.	14	Diontae Spencer
LT	76	Duane Brown	61	Max Mitchell
LG	78	Laken Tomlinson	71	Wes Schweitzer
C	60	Connor McGovern	66	Joe Tippmann (R)
RG	75	Alijah Vera-Tucker	62	Adam Pankey
RT	77	Mekhi Becton	54	Billy Turner
TE	83	Tyler Conklin	87	C.J. Uzomah
QB	8	Aaron Rodgers	2	Zach Wilson
RB	20	Breece Hall	32	Michael Carter

DEFENSE

DE	91	John Franklin-Myers	47	Bryce Huff
DT	95	Quinnen Williams	72	Micheal Clemons
DT	93	Quinton Jefferson	94	Solomon Thomas
DE	58	Carl Lawson	99	Will McDonald IV (R)
LB	56	Quincy Williams	44	Jamien Sherwood
LB	57	C.J. Mosley	53	Zaire Barnes (R)
CB	1	Sauce Gardner	37	Bryce Hall
CB	4	D.J. Reed	34	Justin Hardee
NB	30	Michael Carter II	26	Brandin Echols
SS	23	Chuck Clark	29	Jarrick Bernard-Converse (R)
FS	3	Jordan Whitehead	22	Tony Adams

SPECIALISTS

K	9	Greg Zuerlein	KR 6	Mecole Hardman Jr.
P	5	Thomas Morstead	PR 6	Mecole Hardman Jr.

0

New York was one of three teams last season — and the only AFC club — not to attempt a single two-point conversion.

JETS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Will McDonald IV	DE	6-3	241	Iowa State
2.	Joe Tippmann	C	6-6	317	Wisconsin
4.	Carter Warren	OT	6-5	323	Pittsburgh
5.	Israel Abanikanda	RB	5-11	215	Pittsburgh
6.	Zaire Barnes	LB	6-1	232	W. Michigan
6.	Jarrick Bernard-Converse	DB	6-1	197	LSU
7.	Zack Kuntz	TE	6-8	251	Old Dominion

Joe Tippmann gives the Jets a long-term solution at center (perhaps like they had with Nick Mangold for so many years), even if he doesn't beat out Connor McGovern for the Week 1 starting job. Will McDonald IV, who surely won't start immediately, should work his way into the pass-rushing rotation along with Bryce Huff and Jermaine Johnson II (last year's No. 26 overall pick). McDonald is another fascinating piece for this superb Jets defensive front. All the other draft picks are depth additions. But GM Joe Douglas, in his rebuild, has smartly focused heavily on bolstering this team's depth, which was putrid.

RAVENS

AFC NORTH FORECAST **2**

2023 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 10	Houston	1:00
Sept. 17	at Cincinnati	1:00
Sept. 24	Indianapolis	1:00
Oct. 1	at Cleveland	1:00
Oct. 8	at Pittsburgh	1:00
Oct. 15	Tennessee (London)	9:30
Oct. 22	Detroit	1:00
Oct. 29	at Arizona	4:25
Nov. 5	Seattle	1:00
Nov. 12	Cleveland	1:00
Nov. 16	Cincinnati	8:15
Nov. 26	L.A. Chargers	8:20
Dec. 3	BYE	
Dec. 10	L.A. Rams	1:00
Dec. 17	at Jacksonville	8:20
Dec. 25	at San Francisco	8:15
Dec. 31	Miami	1:00
Jan. 7	Pittsburgh	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

THE COACHES

Head Coach: John Harbaugh
Record With Team: 147-95
Career Record: 147-95
Offensive Coordinator: Todd Monken
Defensive Coordinator: Mike Macdonald
Special Teams Coordinator: Chris Horton
Quarterbacks: Tee Martin
Running Backs: Willie Taggart
Tight Ends: George Godsey
Wide Receivers: Greg Lewis
Offensive Line: Joe D'Alessandris
Assistant Head Coach/Defensive Line: Anthony Weaver
Inside Linebackers: Zachary Orr
Outside Linebackers: Chuck Smith
Pass Game Coordinator/Secondary: Chris Hewitt
Defensive Backs: Dennard Wilson

Lamar Jackson is back, after a drama-filled offseason in which the former league MVP quarterback asked to be traded, then agreed to a historic five-year contract extension instead. The passing attack received a sorely needed jolt with the signing of All-Pro receiver Odell Beckham Jr., while the duo of J.K. Dobbins and Gus Edwards anchors the run game for new offensive coordinator Todd Monken. Defensively, linebacker Roquan Smith leads a physical unit with playmakers in the secondary but persistent concerns about its ability to get to the quarterback. Of course, in crunch time, it always helps to have the most accurate kicker in NFL history (Justin Tucker).

OFFENSE

The Ravens are expected to shift their identity after parting ways with offensive coordinator Greg Roman, the architect of a record-setting rushing attack but also one of the league's least productive passing units over the past few years.

Enter Monken, the offensive coordinator for two-time college football national champion Georgia who has NFL experience in that role with Tampa Bay (2016-18) and Cleveland (2019). Monken has been praised for his ability to shape his scheme to suit his available personnel, so Jackson's unparalleled dual-threat ability still should figure prominently.

The Ravens just hope Jackson can stay on the field. He missed the last month of each of the past two seasons with injuries, and that could have factored in his cool-to-frigid market this spring, when other teams were free to sign him to an offer sheet via the nonexclusive franchise tag but no such offers materialized.

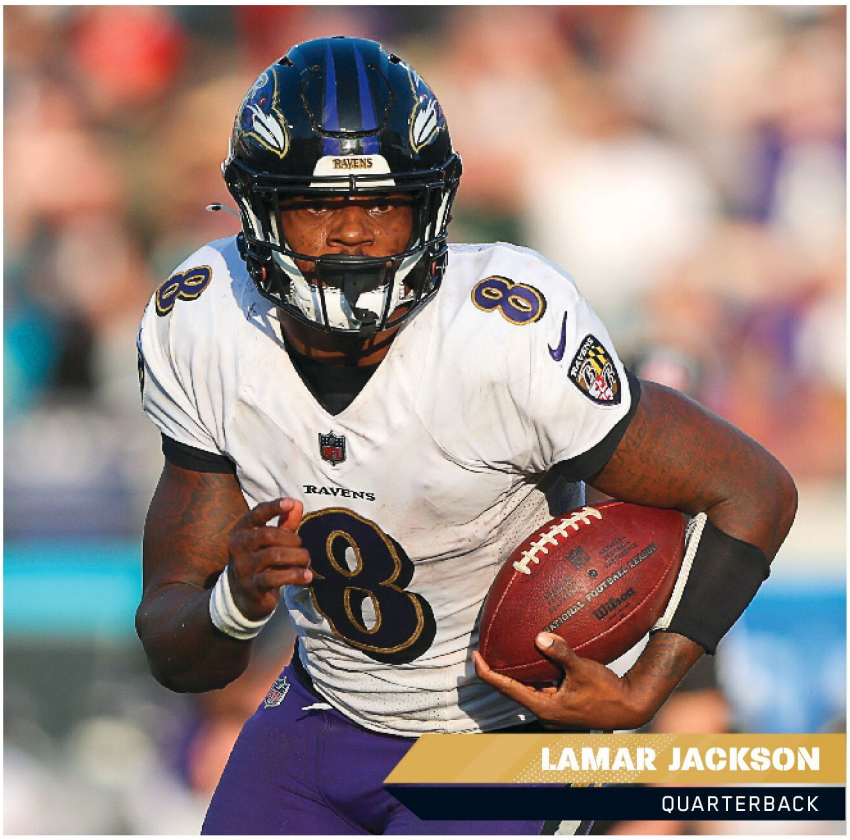
On the bright side, the Ravens have supplied Jackson with the most accomplished offensive arsenal in his six seasons in Baltimore. Beckham, a three-time Pro Bowl pick, has more receiving yards (7,367) than every other wide receiver on the roster combined, and he should be fully recovered from the knee injury that cost him the entire 2022 season. Beckham praised his relationship with Monken during their one year together in Cleveland.

Head coach John Harbaugh has made good on his pledge to rebuild the receiver room after Ravens wideouts ranked last in the league with 1,517 yards in 2022. In addition to Beckham, the Ravens also added Nelson Agholor in free agency and selected Boston College's Zay Flowers with their first-round pick; they'll join a returning unit that includes former first-round pick Rashod Bateman — who missed the final 11 games last year with a foot injury — and Devin Duvernay.

The Ravens still have All-Pro tight end Mark Andrews, Jackson's favorite target since they arrived as rookies together in 2018. He is a matchup problem who is ferociously competitive for the ball and operates in areas of the field where Jackson's passing is most efficient.

In the backfield, Baltimore returns three of its top four running backs from last season; Dobbins, Edwards and Justice Hill are each a full year removed from injuries that sidelined them for the entire 2021 season. Dobbins has been vocal about wanting to be the feature back after being frustrated by his lack of use in key situations, most notably near the goal line in a playoff loss at Cincinnati last season. Watching how Monken utilizes the backs — including Pro Bowl fullback Patrick Ricard — will be one of the emerging storylines of this season.

Pro Bowl left tackle Ronnie Stanley anchors an offensive line that returns four starters, including second-year center Tyler Linderbaum, who didn't miss



NATHAN RAY SEEBECK-USA TODAY SPORTS

a snap as a rookie. The Ravens lost starting left guard Ben Powers to free agency, and Ben Cleveland, entering his third season, probably will have the first chance to win the job.

DEFENSE

The Ravens endured early growing pains last year under first-year coordinator Mike Macdonald, but the unit stabilized over the second half of the season after the team acquired Smith from the Bears in a midseason trade. The team signed Smith to a long-term extension, and he has seamlessly fit into an organization synonymous with physical defense.

Up front, the Ravens lost veteran Calais Campbell, but Justin Madubuike and Broderick Washington Jr. are stout defenders entering their contract years. Interior pressure has been a point of emphasis for this defense, and Madubuike provided that. His 5.5 sacks last year are the most among returning Ravens, while Washington led all defensive linemen last year with 49 tackles. Back for his second go-round with the Ravens, nose tackle Michael Pierce could start inside after missing almost all of last season with a torn biceps.

Smith drives this defense with his relentless sideline-to-sideline pursuit, and inside linebacker Patrick Queen (team-high 117 tackles in 2022) is a more consistent player with Smith alongside him.

On the edge, the Ravens are expecting Odafe Oweh and David Ojabo to be disruptive forces. Oweh, Baltimore's 2021 first-round pick, vanished at times last season and needs to show more explosiveness in beating tackles to the outside. The Ravens drafted Ojabo five weeks after he tore his Achilles, so the team always was taking a long view with him. Ojabo appeared in only two late-season games as a rookie, but now the Ravens hope he can flash the form he showed at Michigan in 2021, when he had 11 sacks playing under Macdonald. Tyus Bowser is the wily veteran of the edge group at 28, although a veteran free-agent addition before the season seems likely.

Cornerback Marlon Humphrey and veteran safety Marcus Williams control the secondary, but the Ravens will probably add a veteran cornerback after letting Marcus Peters hit free agency. Top 2022 draft pick Kyle Hamilton played a hybrid role between safety and slot corner last season, but with Chuck Clark traded to the New York Giants, expect Hamilton to move to a more traditional safety role. At 6-foot-4 and 221 pounds, Hamilton has the size to challenge tight ends and proved to be an adept blitzer. He had two sacks as a rookie, two more than in his entire career at Notre Dame.

SPECIALISTS

The Ravens won't blink about trying a 57-yard field goal, and why should they? Tucker, with a success rate of 90.5 percent, is the most accurate field-goal kicker in NFL history and has shown 60-plus-yard range. The Ravens replaced longtime punter Sam Koch with rookie Jordan Stout last year, and while the Ravens have praised Stout's leg and directional ability, his touchback percentage of 12.3 last year equaled the highest of Koch's 16-year career. Harbaugh, a former special teams coach, surely wants that number to go down.

Duvernay might see his role on offense diminish in the remade receiver group, but he is a two-time Pro Bowl return specialist.

FINAL ANALYSIS

The Ravens have built a solid defense from the back to the front, with a dynamic secondary and Smith locking down the middle, but they seemed to acknowledge that something had to change on offense. They have taken bold steps to upgrade the passing game, and now the pressure falls squarely on Jackson to deliver on his $260 million contract extension. Jackson is 45-16 as a regular-season starter, but he has just one playoff win. "We do feel he's the best quarterback in the NFL, and I think this contract reflects that," general manager Eric DeCosta says. Now, it's up to the 26-year-old Jackson to prove that with a deep postseason run that thus far, like Jackson, has been elusive.

2022 RESULTS (10-7)

Sept. 11	at N.Y. Jets	W	24-9
Sept. 18	Miami	L	38-42
Sept. 25	at New England	W	37-26
Oct. 2	Buffalo	L	20-23
Oct. 9	Cincinnati	W	19-17
Oct. 16	at N.Y. Giants	L	20-24
Oct. 23	Cleveland	W	23-20
Oct. 27	at Tampa Bay	W	27-22
Nov. 7	at New Orleans	W	27-13
Nov. 20	Carolina	W	13-3
Nov. 27	at Jacksonville	L	27-28
Dec. 4	Denver	W	10-9
Dec. 11	at Pittsburgh	W	16-14
Dec. 17	at Cleveland	L	3-13
Dec. 24	Atlanta	W	17-9
Jan. 1	Pittsburgh	L	13-16
Jan. 8	Cincinnati	L	16-27
Postseason			
Jan. 15	at Cincinnati	L	17-24

2022 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	338.8	16	9
Rushing	160.0	2	1
Passing	178.8	28	15
Scoring	20.6	19	10
Third Down %	41.7	11	6
EPA/Play	0.004	17	9
TO Differential	+4	T9	T5

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	324.3	T9	5
Rushing	92.1	3	2
Passing	232.2	26	12
Scoring	18.5	3	2
Interceptions	14	T12	T6
Sacks	48	T5	3
EPA/Play	-0.002	14	8

2022 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Lamar Jackson	326	203	2,242	17	7
Tyler Huntley	112	75	658	2	3

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Lamar Jackson	112	764	6.8	3
J.K. Dobbins	92	520	5.7	2
Kenyan Drake	109	482	4.4	4
Gus Edwards	87	433	5.0	3

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Mark Andrews	73	847	11.6	5
Demar. Robinson	48	458	9.5	2
Devin Duvernay	37	407	11.0	3
Isaiah Likely	36	373	10.4	3

KICKING: Justin Tucker, 37-43 FGs, 31-32 PAT, 142 points
TACKLES: Patrick Queen, 117; Chuck Clark, 101
SACKS: Justin Houston, 9.5; Calais Campbell, 5.5; Justin Madubuike, 5.5
INTERCEPTIONS: Marcus Williams, 4; Marlon Humphrey, 3

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

INSPIRATION All-Pro tight end **Mark Andrews** is a type-1 diabetic who wears a continuous glucose monitor during games, and the data can be accessed at all times by the Ravens' training staff. Andrews often meets with type-1 diabetic children wherever the Ravens play.

SWISS ARMY KNIFE Patrick Mekari can start just about anywhere on Baltimore's offensive line. In four seasons, he has made 29 starts — 12 at right tackle, 10 at center, four at left tackle and three at right guard. He is in the mix for the starting left guard spot, but the Ravens value his ability to come off the bench and fill in anywhere up front.

HIGH SCHOOL REUNION Linebackers Odafe Oweh and David Ojabo were high school teammates at Blair Academy in New Jersey.

STREAK ENDER Kicker Justin Tucker had made 65 straight field-goal attempts in the fourth quarter and/or overtime, but the streak finally came to an end at Jacksonville in 2022. Maybe that deserves an asterisk; the miss was from 67 yards, a yard longer than the NFL record — set by Tucker in 2021.

ICE MAN Defensive lineman Brent Urban grew up in Mississauga, Ontario, and was a high-level hockey player as a teenager. His bantam team won an Ontario title and featured several future NHL players including Ryan Ellis, Casey Cizikas and Ben Chiarot. Urban gave up hockey to focus on football and went to the University of Virginia before being drafted by the Ravens in 2014. The Ravens added another Canadian this year when they drafted Ole Miss outside linebacker Tavius Robinson.

SIBLING RIVALRY Running back Justice Hill, who re-signed with the team this offseason, figures to square off at least twice this year with his younger brother Dax, a safety for the Cincinnati Bengals. Hill, the No. 3 back, is one of the Ravens' top special teams players.

SCOUTING THE RAVENS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP BALTIMORE "Lamar Jackson and the Ravens hammering out that deal was good to see. I never thought he would leave. The deal is reasonable, and it doesn't have to be fully guaranteed for it to stack up well with the other QB deals. … Odell Beckham Jr. gives the Ravens their best all-around wide receiver since Steve Smith Sr. was playing there. OBJ can get wide open, and Lamar can buy enough time to get him the football deep. … I like the Zay Flowers pick for them. I see him complementing OBJ and Devin Duvernay really well. … For my money, the best receiver on this team is their tight end. Mark Andrews has it all: body control, routes and hands. … J.K. Dobbins needs to get the football more. He was 100 percent right to complain. … I think the defensive line isn't really good enough. … Roquan Smith was a nice signing. He plays linebacker the Ravens way. … I don't think they're done with Patrick Queen despite not picking up his fifth-year club option. Watch him get a new deal, too, if he performs well this year. … Marcus Peters was not good last season, and his effort was poor. I can see why they didn't bring him back. … Rock Ya-Sin should be good enough opposite Marlon Humphrey. … That's a heckuva safety tandem — a lot of range and instincts with Marcus Williams and Kyle Hamilton. … Best kicker in the game? Hands down, it's Justin Tucker. It's not even close."

JESSICA RAPFOGEL/USA TODAY SPORTS

2023 RAVENS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS.	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
12 Brown, Anthony	QB	6-1	228	1	Oregon	FA-22	FA-Bal-22
2 Huntley, Tyler	QB	6-1	204	3	Utah	FA-20	FA-Bal-20
8 Jackson, Lamar	QB	6-2	230	5	Louisville	D1b-18	D1b-Bal-18

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
27 Dobbins, J.K.	RB	5-10	212	3	Ohio State	D2-20	D2-Bal-20
35 Edwards, Gus	RB	6-1	238	5	Rutgers	FA-18	FA-Bal-18
43 Hill, Justice	RB	5-10	200	4	Oklahoma State	D4a-19	D4a-Bal-19
42 Ricard, Patrick	FB	6-3	305	6	Maine	FA-17	FA-Bal-17

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
15 Agholor, Nelson	WR	6-0	198	8	USC	FA-NE-23	D1-Phi-15
89 Andrews, Mark	TE	6-5	247	5	Oklahoma	D3b-18	D3b-Bal-18
7 Bateman, Rashod	WR	6-1	197	2	Minnesota	D1a-21	D1a-Bal-21
3 Beckham Jr., Odell	WR	5-11	198	8	LSU	FA-23	D1-NYG-14
Black, Tarik	WR	6-3	213	1	Texas	FA-22	FA-Ind-21
85 Bridges, Shemar	WR	6-4	208	1	Fort Valley State	FA-22	FA-Bal-22
13 Duvernay, Devin	WR	5-11	202	3	Texas	D3b-20	D3b-Bal-20
83 Isabella, Andy	WR	5-9	188	4	UMass	FA-22	D2-Ari-19
88 Kolar, Charlie	TE	6-6	250	1	Iowa State	D4c-22	D4c-Bal-22
80 Likely, Isaiah	TE	6-4	241	1	Coastal Carolina	D4e-22	D4e-Bal-22
38 Mason, Ben	TE	6-3	258	1	Michigan	FA-22	D5-Bal-21
10 Proche II, James	WR	5-11	191	3	SMU	D6-20	D6-Bal-20
87 Thomas, Mike	WR	6-1	197	7	Southern Miss	FA-22	D6-LAR-16
16 Wallace, Tylan	WR	5-11	198	2	Oklahoma State	D4-21	D4-Bal-21

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
66 Cleveland, Ben	G	6-6	370	2	Georgia	D3a-21	D3a-Bal-21
77 Faalele, Daniel	T	6-8	380	1	Minnesota	D4a-22	D4a-Bal-22
64 Linderbaum, Tyler	C	6-2	305	1	Iowa	D1b-22	D1b-Bal-22
65 Mekari, Patrick	OL	6-4	305	4	California	FA-19	FA-Bal-19
78 Moses, Morgan	T	6-6	320	9	Virginia	FA-NYJ-22	D3a-Was-14
74 Sharpe, David	T	6-6	346	5	Florida	FA-21	D4-LV-17
76 Simpson, John	G	6-4	324	3	Clemson	FA-22	D4-LV-20
79 Stanley, Ronnie	T	6-6	315	7	Notre Dame	D1-16	D1-Bal-16
70 Zeitler, Kevin	G	6-4	339	11	Wisconsin	FA-NYG-21	D1b-Cin-12

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
98 Jones, Travis	DT	6-4	334	1	Connecticut	D3-22	D3-Bal-22
92 Madubuike, Justin	DT	6-3	293	3	Texas A&M	D3a-20	D3a-Bal-20
91 Nichols, Rayshad	DT	6-2	305	1	Stephen F. Austin	FA-22	FA-Bal-22
58 Pierce, Michael	NT	6-0	355	6	Samford	FA-Min-22	FA-Bal-16
97 Urban, Brent	DE	6-7	309	8	Virginia	FA-22	D4-Bal-14
96 Washington Jr., Broderick	DT	6-2	314	3	Texas Tech	D5-20	D5-Bal-20

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
54 Bowser, Tyus	OLB	6-3	242	6	Houston	D2-17	D2-Bal-17
40 Harrison, Malik	LB	6-3	259	3	Ohio State	D3c-20	D3c-Bal-20
59 Hayes, Daelin	OLB	6-4	257	2	Notre Dame	D5b-21	D5b-Bal-21
48 Moon, Jeremiah	OLB	6-5	247	1	Florida	FA-22	FA-Bal-22
90 Ojabo, David	OLB	6-4	255	1	Michigan	D2-22	D2-Bal-22
99 Oweh, Odafe	OLB	6-5	257	2	Penn State	D1b-21	D1b-Bal-21
53 Phillips, Del'Shawn	LB	6-2	230	3	Illinois	FA-22	FA-Atl-19
6 Queen, Patrick	ILB	6-0	237	3	LSU	D1-20	D1-Bal-20
51 Ross, Josh	ILB	6-0	229	1	Michigan	FA-22	FA-Bal-22
18 Smith, Roquan	ILB	6-1	232	5	Georgia	T-Chi-22	D1-Chi-18
57 Welch, Kristian	LB	6-3	242	3	Iowa	FA-20	FA-Bal-20

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
5 Armour-Davis, Jalyn	CB	6-1	195	1	Alabama	D4b-22	D4b-Bal-22
14 Hamilton, Kyle	S	6-4	221	1	Notre Dame	D1a-22	D1a-Bal-22
44 Humphrey, Marlon	CB	6-0	205	6	Alabama	D1-17	D1-Bal-17
28 Mullen, Trayvon	CB	6-2	200	4	Clemson	W-Dal-23	D2-LV-19
33 Keyes, BoPete	CB	6-1	202	3	Tulane	FA-22	D7-KC-20
25 Seymour, Kevon	CB	6-0	188	6	USC	FA-21	D6-Buf-16
21 Stephens, Brandon	DB	6-1	215	2	SMU	D3b-21	D3b-Bal-21
26 Stone, Geno	S	5-11	209	3	Iowa	D7-20	D7-Bal-20
29 Washington, Ar'Darius	S	5-8	176	2	TCU	FA-21	FA-Bal-21
22 Williams, Damarion	CB	5-10	180	1	Houston	D4f-22	D4f-Bal-22
32 Williams, Marcus	S	6-1	207	6	Utah	FA-NO-22	D2-NO-17
41 Worley, Daryl	CB	6-1	205	6	West Virginia	FA-22	D3-Car-16
Ya-Sin, Rock	CB	5-11	192	4	Temple	FA-LV-23	D2-Ind-19

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
46 Moore, Nick	LS	6-2	253	3	Georgia	FA-20	FA-NO-19
11 Stout, Jordan	P	6-3	214	1	Penn State	D4d-22	D4d-Bal-22
9 Tucker, Justin	K	6-1	184	11	Texas	FA-12	FA-Bal-12

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	3	Odell Beckham Jr.	15	Nelson Agholor
WR	7	Rashod Bateman	10	James Proche II
WR	4	Zay Flowers (R)	13	Devin Duvernay
LT	79	Ronnie Stanley	65	Patrick Mekari
LG	66	Ben Cleveland	76	John Simpson
C	64	Tyler Linderbaum	65	Patrick Mekari
RG	70	Kevin Zeitler	76	John Simpson
RT	78	Morgan Moses	77	Daniel Faalele
TE	89	Mark Andrews	80	Isaiah Likely
QB	8	Lamar Jackson	2	Tyler Huntley
RB	27	J.K. Dobbins	35	Gus Edwards

DEFENSE

DE	92	Justin Madubuike	97	Brent Urban
NT	58	Michael Pierce	98	Travis Jones
DT	96	Broderick Washington Jr.	91	Rayshad Nichols
OLB	54	Tyus Bowser	95	Tavius Robinson (R)
ILB	6	Patrick Queen	30	Trenton Simpson (R)
ILB	18	Roquan Smith	40	Malik Harrison
OLB	99	Odafe Oweh	90	David Ojabo
CB	21	Brandon Stephens	5	Jalyn Armour-Davis
CB	44	Marlon Humphrey	25	Kevon Seymour
SS	14	Kyle Hamilton	29	Ar'Darius Washington
FS	32	Marcus Williams	26	Geno Stone

SPECIALISTS

K	9	Justin Tucker	KR 13	Devin Duvernay
P	11	Jordan Stout	PR 13	Devin Duvernay

4.0

The Ravens were terrific once again on special teams, tying with the Texans for second-best in Defense-adjusted Value over Average (DVOA) at 4.0 percent, according to Football Outsiders.

RAVENS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Zay Flowers	WR	5-9	182	Boston College
3.	Trenton Simpson	LB	6-2	234	Clemson
4.	Tavius Robinson	OLB	6-6	258	Ole Miss
5.	Kyu Blu Kelly	CB	6-0	192	Stanford
6.	Malaesala Aumavae-Laulu	T	6-5	322	Oregon
7.	Andrew Vorhees	G	6-4	310	USC

The Ravens ended up with just six picks, but they had no qualms about dealing away their second-round pick in the trade that netted franchise anchor Roquan Smith. Zay Flowers adds to a rebuilt receivers room, and Trenton Simpson could be the heir apparent to Patrick Queen at linebacker. Simpson and Tavius Robinson embody the positional flexibility that defensive coordinator Mike Macdonald covets. The Ravens essentially made a futures bet on USC guard Andrew Vorhees, a first-team All-American who tore his ACL at the Combine in February. The decision not to select a plug-and-play cornerback invites scrutiny given depth concerns at the position.

BENGALS

AFC NORTH FORECAST **1**

2023 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 10	at Cleveland	1:00
Sept. 17	Baltimore	1:00
Sept. 25	L.A. Rams	1:00
Oct. 1	Tennessee	1:00
Oct. 8	at Arizona	4:05
Oct. 15	Seattle	1:00
Oct. 22	BYE	
Oct. 29	at San Francisco	4: 25
Nov. 5	Buffalo	8:20
Nov. 12	Houston	1:00
Nov. 16	at Baltimore	8:15
Nov. 26	Pittsburgh	1:00
Dec. 4	at Jacksonville	8:15
Dec. 10	Indianapolis	1:00
Dec. 17	Minnesota	TBD
Dec. 23	at Pittsburgh	4:30
Dec. 31	at Kansas City	4:25
Jan. 7	Cleveland	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

THE COACHES

Head Coach: Zac Taylor
Record With Team: 28-36-1
Career Record: 28-36-1
Offensive Coordinator: Brian Callahan
Defensive Coordinator: Lou Anarumo
Special Teams Coordinator/Assistant Head Coach: Darrin Simmons
Quarterbacks: Dan Pitcher
Running Backs: Justin Hill
Wide Receivers: Troy Walters
Tight Ends: James Casey
Offensive Line/Run Game Coordinator: Frank Pollack
Defensive Line: Marion Hobby
Linebackers: James Bettcher
Secondary/Cornerbacks: Charles Burks
Secondary/Safeties: Robert Livingston

Even though they didn't reach their ultimate goal in 2022, the Bengals proved without a doubt that they're here for the long haul. There was no Super Bowl hangover and no indication that the previous season was a fluke. Instead, Cincinnati was arguably even better as it rolled through the AFC North, finishing 12-4 and reaching the AFC Championship game for a second consecutive year. With their franchise quarterback firmly in place, an elite cast of playmakers, an improved offensive line and one of the league's most underrated defenses, the Bengals aren't going anywhere anytime soon, and they're once again poised to be playing meaningful football well into January and, perhaps, February.

OFFENSE

Joe Burrow, now in his fourth season, just keeps getting better, and the supporting cast around him does, too. That's a big, big problem for the Bengals' competition in the AFC North and beyond because Burrow, one of the NFL's most accurate and unflappable signal-callers, already has done so much with much less than he's poised to have around him in 2023.

It has taken some time, and there have been some mistakes along the way, but the Bengals appear to have their best collection of talent, strength and reliability in front of Burrow since he entered the league. The big-ticket addition of four-time Pro Bowler Orlando Brown Jr. — now on his third team in six seasons — fortifies the Bengals' weakness at left tackle and helps reallocate some of the players who would be better served at different spots on the offensive line. Though he's expressed a desire to play elsewhere, Jonah Williams, the former first-round selection who started his NFL career at left tackle, is expected to shift to right tackle in a move that should strengthen both ends of the O-line. Tack that on with the big moves Cincinnati made to the interior in 2022, when they added veteran guard Alex Cappa and center Ted Karras, and the expected improvement of second-year guard Cordell Volson, and the Bengals are in their best position yet to give Burrow all of the time he needs to get the ball to some of the best wide receivers in the NFL.

And, really, he hasn't needed that much time. Pass catchers like Ja'Marr Chase and Tee Higgins could make an average quarterback look good. With Burrow, though, Chase and Higgins have emerged as one of the best duos in the entire league. The chemistry between Chase and Burrow, a byproduct of their relationship that dates back to their time together at LSU, is unmatched, while Higgins, at 6-foot-4 and 219 pounds, presents one of the NFL's best options on tough third downs and inside the red zone. Ultimately, the bill is going to come due. Both Chase and Higgins are playing on their rookie deals, and Higgins will be a free agent at the end of the season.

If there's a question mark on this Cincinnati offense, it's the running attack, an area that drew the ire of Bengals fans throughout 2022 because of head coach Zac Taylor's persistence in utilizing it. Joe Mixon's best days appear to be behind him, as he averaged just 3.9 yards per carry in 2022 and didn't come close to cracking 1,000 yards. Reliable backup Samaje Perine, who saw a major increase in playing time last season, left for Denver in free agency. That puts a lot of pressure on fifth-round pick Chase Brown (Illinois) or whoever else steps up to fill the void behind Mixon. If it's Brown, he'll need to be just as reliable with his hands, as Mixon and Perine combined for 98 receptions in 2022.

DEFENSE

Cincinnati's defense has seemingly saved its best football for when it matters most, relying heavily on free-agent additions over the past two years. That influx of veteran help has slowed a bit entering 2023. Instead, the Bengals had a couple of key players — including both starting safeties, Jessie Bates III and Vonn Bell — exit for bigger paydays than Cincinnati could offer. The Bengals will need to rely on stability — and perhaps some better injury luck — in the front seven and a youth movement in the secondary if they want to do the same in 2023.

Outside of the addition of first-round pass rusher Myles Murphy — who will have a real opportunity to make an immediate impact — the Bengals didn't do much to reinforce a defensive line that couldn't stay healthy in 2022. They stopped the run at a high level, particularly when tackle DJ Reader was in the lineup, but they couldn't consistently generate the kind of pressure they'd prefer. Trey Hendrickson has been one of the NFL's best pass rushers since he joined the Bengals in 2021 — only three players have more sacks since 2020 — but he'll need some more help from the likes of Sam Hubbard, Murphy and Joseph Ossai in 2023 if Cincinnati wants to crank up the heat on opposing quarterbacks.

No news is good news for the Bengals at linebacker. The re-signing of Germaine Pratt and return of Logan Wilson — who combined for 222 tackles in 2022 — ensures that Cincinnati will have its unheralded but incredibly productive and versatile duo of linebackers together for at least another season. Pratt and Wilson were among the biggest reasons why Cincinnati peaked at the right time during their playoff run, providing the perfect mix of toughness against the run and speed against the pass. Akeem Davis-Gaither has also been a solid member of the group and will be back to provide the same kind of solid depth he did last season.

Amid all of the stability in the front seven, what's happened in Cincinnati's secondary qualifies as an overhaul. Both starting safeties, including an All-Pro in Bates, left for other teams in free agency, and CB Eli Apple, who started 15 games in 2022, wasn't brought back. With the exception of Nick Scott — a free-agent signing from the Rams who is poised to replace Bell at strong safety — Cincinnati will look toward its youth to fill these voids. Last year's first-round pick, Dax Hill, who played in 15 games with two starts as a rookie, is the odds-on favorite to replace Bates, while Cam Taylor-Britt, last year's second-round selection who picked up nine starts after veteran Chidobe Awuzie went down with a season-ending knee injury, is the likely pick to replace Apple. Beyond the starters, a pair of Day 2 rookies — CB DJ Turner II (Michigan) and S Jordan Battle (Alabama) — are expected to provide valuable depth behind a starting secondary that features a blend of experience (Awuzie, Scott, Mike Hilton) and unproven potential (Taylor-Britt, Hill).

SPECIALISTS

It's hard to be as good as K Evan McPherson was as a rookie, and McPherson definitely wasn't as reliable — he was 24-of-29 on field goals and missed four extra points — during his second NFL season. Still, McPherson boasts one of the biggest legs in the league and provides the kind of reliability and hunger for big-time moments teams covet from the position. The sixth-round selection of Brad Robbins indicates that the Bengals will have a punting competition between the rookie from Michigan and last year's starter, Drue Chrisman. Cincinnati has a couple more options in the return game than it did last season, most notably fourth-round WR Charlie Jones.

FINAL ANALYSIS

The AFC is absolutely stacked. The Bengals could be even better than they've been the past two years and still not get as far in the playoffs. Cincinnati, though, has pulled all of the right levers to ensure that 2023 will be a year it can expect to be in the mix from start to finish, and it will be considered much less of a surprise if it makes it back to the AFC Championship for a third consecutive season.

JAY BIGGERSTAFF-USA TODAY SPORTS

2022 RESULTS (12-4)

Sept. 11	Pittsburgh (ot)	L	20-23
Sept. 18	at Dallas	L	17-20
Sept. 25	at N.Y. Jets	W	27-12
Sept. 29	Miami	W	27-15
Oct. 9	at Baltimore	L	17-19
Oct. 16	at New Orleans	W	30-26
Oct. 23	Atlanta	W	35-17
Oct. 31	at Cleveland	L	13-32
Nov. 6	Carolina	W	42-21
Nov. 20	at Pittsburgh	W	37-30
Nov. 27	at Tennessee	W	20-16
Dec. 4	Kansas City	W	27-24
Dec. 11	Cleveland	W	23-10
Dec. 18	at Tampa Bay	W	34-23
Dec. 24	at New England	W	22-18
Jan. 2	Buffalo		Canceled
Jan. 8	Baltimore	W	27-16
Postseason			
Jan. 15	Baltimore	W	24-17
Jan. 22	at Buffalo	W	27-10
Jan. 29	at Kansas City	L	20-23

2022 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	360.5	8	4
Rushing	95.5	29	14
Passing	265.0	5	4
Scoring	26.1	7	3
Third Down %	46.1	3	3
EPA/Play	0.081	5	3
TO Differential	+6	6	2

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	335.7	14	10
Rushing	106.6	7	5
Passing	229.1	23	11
Scoring	20.1	5	9
Interceptions	13	18	10
Sacks	30	29	15
EPA/Play	-0.043	8	4

2022 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Joe Burrow	606	414	4,475	35	12
Brandon Allen	3	3	22	0	0

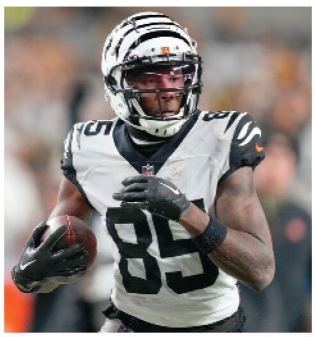
RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Joe Mixon	210	814	3.9	7
Samaje Perine	95	394	4.1	2
Joe Burrow	75	257	3.4	5

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Ja'Marr Chase	87	1,046	12.0	9
Tee Higgins	74	1,029	13.9	7
Joe Mixon	60	441	7.5	2
Tyler Boyd	58	762	13.1	5
Hayden Hurst	52	414	8.0	2

KICKING: Evan McPherson, 24-29 FGs, 40-44 PAT, 112 points
TACKLES: Logan Wilson, 123; Germaine Pratt, 99
SACKS: Trey Hendrickson, 8.0; Sam Hubbard, 6.5
INTERCEPTIONS: Jessie Bates III, 4; Vonn Bell, 4

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

DROP THE 8 It took a couple of years, but Bengals star WR **Tee Higgins** finally got what he wanted. After three years of sporting No. 85, Higgins dropped the "8" and is now just No. 5 — a throwback to his glory days at Clemson and out of respect to Chad "Ochocinco" Johnson, who wore "85" throughout his decorated career with the Bengals in the early 2000s. Higgins has been looking to do this since the 2021 season, but finances got in the way from making it happen. It would have cost him big time had he made the swap for the 2022 season because he would have been forced to buy back all of the replica jerseys that were already produced. So, instead, Higgins bided his time and waited for 2023, the final year of his rookie deal.



A GIFT FROM GOD? No one in Cincinnati was more thrilled by the first-round selection of DE Myles Murphy than senior defensive assistant Mark Duffner. According to the Bengals' official website, Duffner bolted out of his office to celebrate with his fellow coaches when the pick was made official. "I had a Who Dey proclamation and a Thank God proclamation," Duffner told Bengals.com. "Surprised? I think everyone in the country is surprised."

A PART OF HISTORY The Bengals' fifth-round selection of Illinois RB Chase Brown helped solidify a bit of history in the 2023 NFL Draft. Brown and S Sydney Brown became the first set of brothers to be picked in the opening five rounds of the same draft since Tiki and Ronde Barber in 1997. Sydney, who played with Chase at Illinois, went in the third round to Philadelphia.

TED KNOWS Ted Karras spent years playing alongside and snapping the ball to Tom Brady. Now, he's the every-down center for Joe Burrow, who has drawn some Brady comparisons here and there since joining the league in 2020. "Yes, Joey B's a killer," Karras said during an appearance on the Pat McAfee Show. "We are going to win one (a Super Bowl). It's all I can think about."

SCOUTING THE BENGALS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP CINCINNATI "Joe Burrow deserves to get more money than Lamar Jackson. Joe Cool is icy out there on the field. Can't think of an area of the game he's deficient at. … Ja'Marr Chase checks all the boxes as a versatile wide receiver. … Not sure if the Bengals will pay the freight for Tee Higgins. If they don't, someone else will. … Tyler Boyd does a lot of good things every year. … I didn't think Orlando Brown Jr. played that great for the Chiefs or the Ravens. His contract is good, but it doesn't reflect a Pro Bowl left tackle. He's not as good as Laremy Tunsil and other elite left tackles. … Jonah Williams' trade request gained zero steam. I predict he stays and settles in at right tackle. … Joe Mixon is a great running back, but his off-field issues keep following a pattern of erratic behavior. At this point, you can't chalk it up to immaturity. … DJ Reader is a serious heavyweight anchor. … I like Sam Hubbard, but they needed another defensive end. Myles Murphy fits the bill. … Trey Hendrickson's repertoire of pass-rushing moves is impressive. … Logan Wilson is on the Bengals' list of contract extension candidates. He's earned another contract. … Dax Hill is why the Bengals were comfortable not getting into a bidding war for Jessie Bates III. When you have a good young player in the building on a rookie deal, you don't double down and pay the vet. … Nick Scott did a good job with the Rams. I can see why the Bengals signed him. … Few teams have a kicker like Evan McPherson."

KAREEM ELGAZZAR/USA TODAY SPORTS

2023 BENGALS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS.	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
6 Browning, Jake	QB	6-2	209	1	Washington	FA-21	FA-Min-19
9 Burrow, Joe	QB	6-4	215	3	LSU	D1-20	D1-Cin-20
19 Siemian, Trevor	QB	6-3	220	8	Northwestern	FA-Chi-23	D7a-Den-15
RUNNING BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
25 Evans, Chris	RB	5-11	215	2	Michigan	D6b-21	D6b-Cin-21
36 Holyfield, Elijah	RB	5-10	219	2	Georgia	FA-21	FA-Car-19
28 Mixon, Joe	RB	6-1	220	6	Oklahoma	D2-17	D2-Cin-17
32 Williams, Trayveon	RB	5-8	206	4	Texas A&M	D6a-19	D6a-Cin-19
RECEIVERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
86 Asiasi, Devin	TE	6-3	260	3	UCLA	W-NE-22	D3b-NE-20
82 Bowers, Nick	TE	6-4	260	2	Penn State	FA-22	FA-LV-20
83 Boyd, Tyler	WR	6-2	203	7	Pittsburgh	D2-16	D2-Cin-16
1 Chase, Ja'Marr	WR	6-0	201	2	LSU	D1-21	D1-Cin-21
5 Higgins, Tee	WR	6-4	219	3	Clemson	D2-20	D2-Cin-20
87 Hudson, Tanner	TE	6-5	239	3	Southern Arkansas	FA-22	FA-TB-18
16 Irwin, Trenton	WR	6-2	200	3	Stanford	FA-19	FA-Mia-19
18 Lassiter II, Kwamie	WR	5-11	185	1	Kansas	FA-22	FA-Cin-22
17 Morgan, Stanley	WR	6-0	205	4	Nebraska	FA-19	FA-Cin-19
89 Sample, Drew	TE	6-5	255	4	Washington	D2-19	D2-Cin-19
81 Smith Jr., Irv	TE	6-2	240	4	Alabama	FA-Min-23	D2-Min-19
11 Taylor, Trent	WR	5-8	181	5	Louisiana Tech	FA-21	D5b-SF-17
OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
77 Adeniji, Hakeem	T	6-4	315	3	Kansas	D6-20	D6-Cin-20
62 Brown, Ben	C	6-5	312	1	Ole Miss	FA-22	FA-Cin-22
75 Brown Jr., Orlando	T	6-8	340	5	Oklahoma	FA-KC-23	D3a-Bal-18
65 Cappa, Alex	G	6-6	310	5	Humboldt State	FA-TB-22	D3-TB-18
79 Carman, Jackson	G/T	6-5	322	2	Clemson	D2-21	D2-Cin-21
76 Cochran, Devin	T	6-7	310	1	Georgia Tech	FA-22	FA-Cin-22
71 Collins, La'el	T	6-4	314	8	LSU	FA-Dal-22	FA-Dal-15
66 Gilliam, Nate	G	6-5	300	1	Wake Forest	FA-22	FA-LAC-20
61 Ford, Cody	G	6-3	329	4	Oklahoma	FA-Ari-23	D2-Buf-19
63 Hill, Trey	C	6-4	335	2	Georgia	D6a-21	D6a-Cin-21
64 Karras, Ted	C	6-4	310	7	Illinois	FA-NE-22	D6c-NE-16
74 Scharping, Max	G	6-6	325	4	Northern Illinois	W-Hou-22	D2b-Hou-19
70 Smith, D'Ante	T	6-5	309	2	East Carolina	D4c-21	D4c-Cin-21
67 Volson, Cordell	G	6-6	315	1	North Dakota St.	D4-22	D4-Cin-22
73 Williams, Jonah	T	6-5	312	4	Alabama	D1-19	D1-Cin-19
DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
52 Basham, Tarell	DE	6-4	266	6	Ohio	FA-Ten-23	D3-Bal-16
90 Carney, Owen	DE	6-2	252	1	Illinois	FA-22	FA-Mia-22
95 Carter, Zach	DT	6-4	290	1	Florida	D3-22	D3-Cin-22
72 Davis, Domenique	DT	6-2	326	1	N. Carolina-Pembroke	FA-22	FA-NYJ-20
93 Gunter, Jeff	DE	6-4	263	1	Coastal Carolina	D7-22	D7-Cin-22
91 Hendrickson, Trey	DE	6-4	270	6	Florida Atlantic	FA-NO-21	D3c-NO-17
92 Hill, B.J.	DT	6-3	311	5	NC State	T-NYG-21	D3-NYG-18
94 Hubbard, Sam	DE	6-5	265	5	Ohio State	D3a-18	D3a-Cin-18
69 Johnson III, Raymond	DE	6-3	264	2	Georgia Southern	FA-22	FA-NYG-21
58 Ossai, Joseph	DE	6-4	263	2	Texas	D3-21	D3-Cin-21
98 Reader, DJ	DT	6-3	335	7	Clemson	FA-Hou-20	D5b-Hou-16
96 Sample, Cam	DE	6-3	272	2	Tulane	D4a-21	D4a-Cin-21
97 Tufele, Jay	DT	6-3	305	2	USC	W-Jac-22	D4b-Jac-21
68 Tupou, Josh	DT	6-3	340	5	Colorado	FA-17	FA-Cin-17
LINEBACKERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
49 Bachie, Joe	LB	6-2	235	3	Michigan State	W-Phi-21	FA-NO-20
51 Bailey, Markus	LB	6-0	235	3	Purdue	D7-20	D7-Cin-20
59 Davis-Gaither, Akeem	LB	6-2	228	3	Appalachian State	D4-20	D4-Cin-20
47 Jones, Keandre	LB	6-3	220	2	Maryland	FA-20	FA-Chi-20
57 Pratt, Germaine	LB	6-3	250	4	NC State	D3-19	D3-Cin-19
55 Wilson, Logan	LB	6-2	245	3	Wyoming	D3-20	D3-Cin-20
DEFENSIVE BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
26 Anderson, Tycen	S	6-2	209	1	Toledo	D5-22	D5-Cin-22
22 Awuzie, Chidobe	CB	6-0	202	6	Colorado	FA-Dal-21	D2-Dal-17
37 Corker, Yusuf	S	6-0	197	1	Kentucky	FA-22	FA-NYG-22
35 Davis, Jalen	CB	5-10	190	3	Utah State	FA-20	FA-Mia-18
42 George, Allan	CB	5-11	191	1	Vanderbilt	FA-22	FA-Cin-22
23 Hill, Dax	S	6-0	191	1	Michigan	D1-22	D1-Cin-22
21 Hilton, Mike	CB	5-9	184	6	Ole Miss	FA-Pit-21	FA-Jac-16
24 Jones IV, Sidney	CB	6-0	186	6	Washington	FA-LV-23	D2-Phi-17
33 Scott, Nick	S	5-11	201	4	Penn State	FA-LAR-23	D7a-LAR-19
29 Taylor-Britt, Cam	CB	5-11	202	1	Nebraska	D2-22	D2-Cin-22
39 Tell III, Marvell	CB	6-2	198	2	USC	FA-22	D5-Ind-19
31 Thomas, Michael J.	S	5-11	192	9	Stanford	FA-21	FA-SF-12
SPECIALISTS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
48 Adomitis, Cal	LS	6-2	238	1	Pittsburgh	FA-22	FA-Cin-22
4 Chrisman, Drue	P	6-3	211	1	Ohio State	FA-21	FA-Cin-21
2 McPherson, Evan	K	5-11	185	2	Florida	D5-21	D5-Cin-21

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	1	Ja'Marr Chase	15	Charlie Jones (R)
WR	5	Tee Higgins	11	Trent Taylor
WR	83	Tyler Boyd	16	Trenton Irwin
LT	75	Orlando Brown Jr.	79	Jackson Carman
LG	67	Cordell Volson	74	Max Scharping
C	64	Ted Karras	63	Trey Hill
RG	65	Alex Cappa	66	Nate Gilliam
RT	73	Jonah Williams	71	La'el Collins
TE	81	Irv Smith Jr.	89	Drew Sample
QB	9	Joe Burrow	6	Jake Browning
RB	28	Joe Mixon	30	Chase Brown (R)

DEFENSE

DE	94	Sam Hubbard	99	Myles Murphy (R)
DT	98	DJ Reader	68	Josh Tupou
DT	92	B.J. Hill	95	Zach Carter
DE	91	Trey Hendrickson	58	Joseph Ossai
SLB	59	Akeem Davis-Gaither	47	Keandre Jones
MLB	57	Germaine Pratt	51	Markus Bailey
WLB	55	Logan Wilson	49	Joe Bachie
CB	29	Cam Taylor-Britt	21	Mike Hilton
CB	22	Chidobe Awuzie	20	DJ Turner II (R)
SS	27	Nick Scott	27	Jordan Battle (R)
FS	23	Dax Hill	26	Tycen Anderson

SPECIALISTS

K	2	Evan McPherson	KR	Charlie Jones (R)
P	10	Brad Robbins (R)	KR	Charlie Jones (R)

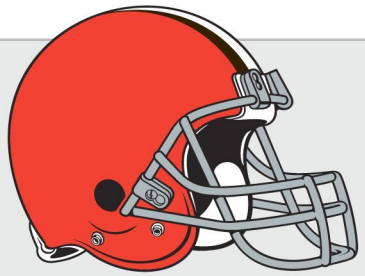
18.1%

Last season, the Bengals ranked third among AFC teams and fifth in the NFL in Football Outsiders' Defense-adjusted Value over Average (DVOA) statistic at 18.1 percent, trailing only the Bills and Chiefs.

BENGALS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: A-

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Myles Murphy	DE	6-5	275	Clemson
2.	DJ Turner II	CB	6-0	180	Michigan
3.	Jordan Battle	S	6-1	206	Alabama
4.	Charlie Jones	WR	6-0	188	Purdue
5.	Chase Brown	RB	5-9	215	Illinois
6.	Andrei Iosivas	WR	6-3	212	Princeton
6.	Brad Robbins	P	6-1	203	Michigan
7.	DJ Ivey	CB	6-1	195	Miami (Fla.)

The Bengals were thrilled and surprised to land Myles Murphy — an edge rusher who is poised to make a big impact as a rookie — with the No. 28 pick after rating him as a borderline top-10 prospect. DJ Turner II and Jordan Battle give Cincinnati two potential starting options in the new-look secondary. The Bengals used Day 3 to shore up their offensive depth, particularly at wide receiver, which boasts one of the best starting units in the league but was in need of backup talent. Charlie Jones, a speedy returner, could give the Bengals a big boost on special teams, an area Cincinnati also bolstered with the addition of Brad Robbins, who will compete with Drue Chrisman.



CLE BROWNS

AFC NORTH FORECAST **4**

2023 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 10	Cincinnati	1:00
Sept. 18	at Pittsburgh	8:15
Sept. 24	Tennessee	1:00
Oct. 1	Baltimore	1:00
Oct. 8	BYE	
Oct. 15	San Francisco	1:00
Oct. 22	at Indianapolis	1:00
Oct. 29	at Seattle	4:05
Nov. 5	Arizona	1:00
Nov. 12	at Baltimore	1:00
Nov. 19	Pittsburgh	1:00
Nov. 26	at Denver	4:05
Dec. 3	at L.A. Rams	4:25
Dec. 10	Jacksonville	1:00
Dec. 17	Chicago	TBD
Dec. 24	at Houston	1:00
Dec. 28	N.Y. Jets	8:15
Jan. 7	at Cincinnati	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

THE COACHES

Head Coach: Kevin Stefanski
Record With Team: 26-24
Career Record: 26-24
Offensive Coordinator: Alex Van Pelt
Defensive Coordinator: Jim Schwartz
Assistant Head Coach/Special Teams Coordinator: Bubba Ventrone
Run Game Coordinator/Running Backs: Stump Mitchell
Pass Game Coordinator/Wide Receivers: Chad O'Shea
Tight Ends: T.C. McCartney
Offensive Line: Bill Callahan
Defensive Line: Ben Bloom
Linebackers: Jason Tarver
Cornerbacks: Brandon Lynch
Safeties: Ephraim Banda

The Browns are coming off a fourth-place finish and have missed the playoffs in 19 of the past 20 seasons. But this team is in a unique position and feels it's on the verge of becoming a true AFC contender after a strange 2022 season ended with quarterback Deshaun Watson playing poorly in his first action in nearly two years.

The Browns traded the farm — three first-rounders and three additional picks — for Watson in March 2022 and in doing so believed they had ended their 30-year run of not having a long-term answer at quarterback. But Watson served an 11-game suspension for multiple violations of the NFL's personal conduct policy before debuting last December and delivering mediocre results.

Watson was understandably rusty. The offense was understandably disjointed. The Browns had built-in excuses for a weak end to a season that had pretty much been lost long before Watson debuted thanks to a poor run defense and a bunch of late-game failures in multiple phases. With Watson now fully eligible and new defensive coordinator Jim Schwartz in place, the Browns believe they're ready to deliver much better results.

OFFENSE

The Browns certainly have front-line talent. Amari Cooper headlines a receiving corps that added the speedy Elijah Moore this offseason. Nick Chubb is one of the league's best running backs, and he runs behind an experienced and talented offensive line. The Browns believe Watson can rediscover the form that made him a young star in Houston, and they believe with Moore and Marquise Goodwin that they've upgraded his pass-catching options. Moore brings speed and can line up across the formation, and the Browns think athletic tight end David Njoku can also turn simple plays into big gains.

Watson threw seven touchdown passes and five interceptions last season, completing 58 percent of his passes and posting a passer rating of 79.1. By comparison, in four seasons with the Texans, he completed 67.8 percent and his QB rating was 104.5. The Browns are expecting Watson to get back to those numbers in his second season. Both Watson and head coach and play-caller Kevin Stefanski have said that Watson is more comfortable with his surroundings and with a playbook that will be tailored to Watson's improvisational strengths.

Stefanski pushed for the team to trade for Moore, a player whom Browns general manager Andrew Berry had pursued ahead of last November's trade deadline. Moore is explosive and had a solid rookie year for the Jets (43 catches, 538 yards, five TDs); the Browns are betting that with improved quarterback play, he'll not only put up bigger numbers but also deter defenses from paying extra attention to Cooper. Though Cooper was limited by a hip injury last December, the Browns think Cooper and Watson can continue to build chemistry and that Cooper will have another big season.

The Browns want to throw it more, but they shouldn't forget about the gifted and ultra-reliable runner they have in Chubb. Stefanski's system included a lot of play-action rollouts and bootlegs even before the Browns added Watson, and the internal belief is that if Watson can make the passing game more open and dangerous, it should give Chubb more chances to close games. All of these financial investments the Browns have made on mostly front-loaded contracts add extra urgency to this season. Though almost all of the core offensive players are under contract for 2024 (or beyond), the high cap numbers they're carrying make it unlikely they can keep everyone together.

DAVID DERMER-USA TODAY SPORTS

As long as Watson finds his confidence and the offense adapts accordingly, the Browns will consider that a good problem to have. Every listed offensive starter is back, so Watson must deliver on his promise for the Browns to get back to the postseason.

DEFENSE

In defensive end Myles Garrett and cornerback Denzel Ward, the Browns have defensive cornerstones. They need big years out of both, and for as much as Garrett has talked in the past about having lofty goals and wanting to be NFL Defensive Player of the Year, the Browns need a monster year out of him. He's talented enough that just about any goal would be realistic.

The defensive tackle group was so bad last year that then-defensive coordinator Joe Woods didn't have much of a chance to keep his job. But the Browns think that Schwartz can get the best out of Garrett and also clean up some of the situational failures that plagued the team last season. The signing of 325-pound Dalvin Tomlinson added some much-needed mass to the defensive tackle spot, and the Browns brought back veteran linebacker and signal-caller Anthony Walker Jr. after a significant quad injury.

Cornerback is the only defensive group where the Browns enter the season with some proven depth. Under Schwartz, they want to do a better job of forcing opponents into must-pass situations and of using the rush to assist the pass coverage. As bad as the Browns were on run defense last season (25th in the NFL), simply forcing a few more turnovers and not melting down in the final two minutes of the Jets game may have changed the entire outlook — and likely some key results.

A year after giving Watson a five-year contract worth a record $230 million in full guarantees, the Browns had to restructure that deal to free up money for some free-agent shopping. While pushing some of Watson's money forward was always part of the long-term planning, the Browns hoped they wouldn't be so desperate for defensive fixes. In addition to Tomlinson, they signed edge rusher Ogbonnia Okoronkwo and safety Juan Thornhill, who replaces John Johnson III after Johnson became the Browns' latest big-money free agent bust.

After strong rookie seasons, the Browns didn't see the growth they wanted from linebacker Jeremiah Owusu-Koramoah or cornerback Greg Newsome II in 2022. Owusu-Koramoah is one of four returning linebackers who finished the season on injured reserve, and linebacker is an area where the Browns are extremely thin headed into this season.

The team is placing a lot of faith in Schwartz, who has previously been a successful coordinator with the Titans, Bills and Eagles (along with a head coaching stint with the Lions from 2009-13, where the team saw marked defensive improvement from when he started). They think an attack-based scheme will help the offense by creating more turnovers, and they think Okoronkwo is an emerging player who will thrive opposite Garrett. The drafting of 358-pound nose tackle Siaki Ika in the third round should help the run defense, and assuming Walker is healthy, he'll help a bunch of the young players catch on to Schwartz's system.

SPECIALISTS

After three years of inconsistent special teams play and a shaky rookie year by talented kicker Cade York, the Browns fired longtime special teams coach Mike Priefer and replaced him with former Browns special teams player Bubba Ventrone, who also got the title of assistant head coach. Ventrone's primary task will be getting more consistency out of York, who has enough leg strength to handle kicking in late-season AFC North weather.

FINAL ANALYSIS

The Browns feel that Watson will be a different player, one who's not just confident in himself and his surroundings but one who also elevates the entire team. Add the necessary defensive changes — scheme and players — and it wouldn't be a surprise to see the Browns in the mix in the ultra-competitive AFC North.

2022 RESULTS (7-10)

Sept. 11	at Carolina	W	26-24
Sept. 18	N.Y. Jets	L	30-31
Sept. 22	Pittsburgh	W	29-17
Oct. 2	at Atlanta	L	20-23
Oct. 9	L.A. Chargers	L	28-30
Oct. 16	New England	L	15-38
Oct. 23	at Baltimore	L	20-23
Oct. 31	Cincinnati	W	32-13
Nov. 13	at Miami	L	17-39
Nov. 20	Buffalo	L	23-31
Nov. 27	Tampa Bay (ot)	W	23-17
Dec. 4	at Houston	W	27-14
Dec. 11	at Cincinnati	L	10-23
Dec. 17	Baltimore	W	13-3
Dec. 24	New Orleans	L	10-17
Jan. 1	at Washington	W	24-10
Jan. 8	at Pittsburgh	L	14-28

2022 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	349.1	14	8
Rushing	146.5	6	2
Passing	202.6	22	12
Scoring	21.2	18	9
Third Down %	38.1	19	9
EPA/Play	0.013	12	6
TO Differential	-1	T16	T8

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	331.2	14	8
Rushing	135.0	25	14
Passing	196.2	5	2
Scoring	22.4	20	11
Interceptions	11	T21	T12
Sacks	34	T27	14
EPA/Play	0.029	25	15

2022 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Jacoby Brissett	369	236	2,608	12	6
Deshaun Watson	170	99	1,102	7	5

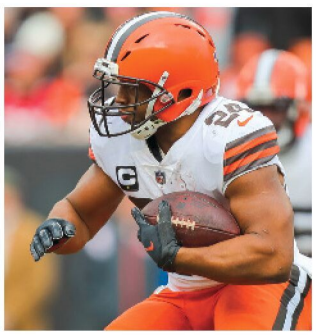
RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Nick Chubb	302	1,525	5.0	12
Kareem Hunt	123	468	3.8	3
Jacoby Brissett	49	243	5.0	2

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Amari Cooper	78	1,160	14.9	9
D. Peoples-Jones	61	839	13.8	3
David Njoku	58	628	10.8	4
Kareem Hunt	35	210	6.0	1
Harrison Bryant	31	239	7.7	1

KICKING: Cade York, 24-32 FGs, 35-37 PAT, 107 points
TACKLES: Grant Delpit, 105; John Johnson III, 101
SACKS: Myles Garrett, 16.0; Taven Bryan, 3.0
INTERCEPTIONS: Grant Delpit, 4; Denzel Ward, 3

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

MOVING UP With 6,341 career yards, **Nick Chubb** enters his sixth NFL season as the fourth-leading rusher in franchise history. He seems certain to pass Mike Pruitt (6,540) for third and could pass Hall of Famer Leroy Kelly (7,274) for second in 2023. Chubb's career average of 5.2 yards per carry equals the career average of Jim Brown, the franchise's career rushing leader and a player so good he's still commonly referred to as "The Greatest" almost 60 years after his retirement.



LONG AND WINDING ROAD New defensive coordinator Jim Schwartz didn't have a prior relationship with head coach Kevin Stefanski, but Schwartz worked for the Browns before. Schwartz's first NFL job was with the Browns as a scouting assistant from 1993-95 under then-head coach Bill Belichick. The Browns left for Baltimore after 1995 and became the Ravens, and Schwartz went along as a defensive assistant. Now, Schwartz is back as the coordinator after a long run that included a stint as head coach in Detroit.

HONORING DAD Denzel Ward, who grew up in the Cleveland area, continues to run a free youth football camp at his alma mater, Nordonia High School, each spring. The camp is part of the year-round efforts made by Ward's foundation, Make Them Know Your Name, to fund community outreach and support heart education and related programs. The foundation was formed in honor of Ward's late father, Paul, who stressed to his sons the importance of making opponents know their names.

GIVING BACK Guard Joel Bitonio, the longest-tenured Brown and a Pro Bowl selection in each of the last five years, made a $1 million donation to fund a new weight room at the University of Nevada. The donation by Joel and his wife, Courtney, was announced last spring and will fund The Bitonio Family Strength and Conditioning Center at Nevada, where Bitonio played from 2009-13 before the Browns drafted him in the second round in 2014. A draft that started with busts Justin Gilbert and Johnny Manziel then led the Browns to one of the best picks of the team's new era.

SCOUTING THE BROWNS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP CLEVELAND "Deshaun Watson should be a lot more comfortable and productive. He needs to be after signing that $230 million guaranteed deal. Clearly, he was distracted and rusty. That's a lot of pressure and stress after that kind of scandal. If this trade doesn't work, heads will roll. … I believe Kevin Stefanski is on the hot seat. Andrew Berry should be safe. … The chemistry between Watson and Amari Cooper and Donovan Peoples-Jones was getting better as the season went on. … Elijah Moore was a good addition in the slot. … Jedrick Wills Jr. played just well enough for them to pick up his fifth-year option. … Wyatt Teller is an animal. … Nick Chubb is as steady and tough as the day is long. … Myles Garrett draws a lot of double-team blocks, but he always finds a way to get penetration. … Ogbonnia Okoronkwo finished last season strongly for the Texans. They should have re-signed him. … Jeremiah Owusu-Koramoah is outstanding in space. … Denzel Ward doesn't get enough attention from the media, but, around the league, everyone knows how good he is. … Greg Newsome II is a disappointment. He actually did want to be traded despite publicly denying the trade request. … Grant Delpit, when healthy, is a playmaker. … Martin Emerson Jr. was one of the best rookies on defense in the NFL last year. Dalvin Tomlinson makes them a stouter defense immediately. … Juan Thornhill is reliable in deep coverage."

KATIE STRATMAN/USA TODAY SPORTS

2023 BROWNS VETERAN ROSTER

	QUARTERBACKS	POS.	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
15	Dobbs, Joshua	QB	6-3	216	6	Tennessee	FA-Ten-23	D4-Pit-17
7	Mond, Kellen	QB	6-3	217	2	Texas A&M	W-Min-22	D3a-Min-21
4	Watson, Deshaun	QB	6-3	223	6	Clemson	T-Hou-22	D1-Hou-17

	RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
24	Chubb, Nick	RB	5-11	227	5	Georgia	D2b-18	D2b-Cle-18
25	Felton Jr., Demetric	RB	5-9	190	2	UCLA	D6-21	D6-Cle-21
34	Ford, Jerome	RB	5-10	210	1	Cincinnati	D5-22	D5-Cle-22
41	Kelly Jr., John	RB	5-10	208	3	Tennessee	FA-22	D6-LAR-18
48	McCrary, Nate	RB	6-0	213	1	Saginaw Valley St.	FA-23	FA-Bal-21

	RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
84	Akins, Jordan	TE	6-4	243	6	UCF	FA-Hou-23	D3-Hou-18
17	Baldwin, Daylen	WR	6-2	212	1	Michigan	FA-22	FA-Cle-22
18	Bell, David	WR	6-1	212	1	Purdue	D3c-22	D3c-Cle-22
88	Bryant, Harrison	TE	6-5	230	3	Florida Atlantic	D4-20	D4-Cle-20
2	Cooper, Amari	WR	6-1	211	8	Alabama	T-Dal-22	D1-LV-15
16	Darden, Jaelon	WR	5-8	175	2	North Texas	W-TB-22	D4-TB-21
19	Goodwin, Marquise	WR	5-9	183	9	Texas	FA-Sea-23	D3-Buf-13
9	Grant Sr., Jakeem	WR	5-6	170	7	Texas Tech	FA-Chi-22	D6a-Mia-16
82	Harley Jr., Mike	WR	5-10	180	1	Miami (Fla.)	FA-22	FA-Cle-22
83	Mitchell-Paden, Zaire	TE	6-5	257	1	Florida Atlantic	FA-22	FA-Cle-22
8	Moore, Elijah	WR	5-10	178	2	Ole Miss	T-NYJ-23	D2-NYJ-21
85	Njoku, David	TE	6-4	246	6	Miami (Fla.)	D1c-17	D1c-Cle-17
11	Peoples-Jones, D.	WR	6-2	204	3	Michigan	D6-20	D6-Cle-20
10	Schwartz, Anthony	WR	6-0	186	2	Auburn	D3-21	D3-Cle-21
15	Stevenson, Marquez	WR	5-10	180	2	Houston	FA-22	D6-Buf-21
81	Weston, Isaiah	WR	6-4	214	1	Northern Iowa	FA-22	FA-Cle-22
12	Woods II, Michael	WR	6-1	204	1	Oklahoma	D6-22	D6-Cle-22

	OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
75	Bitonio, Joel	G	6-4	320	9	Nevada	D2-14	D2-Cle-14
78	Conklin, Jack	T	6-6	308	7	Michigan State	FA-Ten-20	D1-Ten-16
52	Deaton, Dawson	G	6-1	306	1	Texas Tech	D7b-22	D7b-Cle-22
68	Dunn, Michael	G	6-5	315	3	Maryland	FA-20	FA-LAR-17
70	Forbes, Drew	G	6-5	308	3	SE Missouri State	W-Det-22	D6-Cle-19
59	Haeg, Joe	T	6-6	304	7	North Dakota St.	FA-22	D5-Ind-16
53	Harris, Nick	C	6-1	293	3	Washington	D5-20	D5-Cle-20
66	Hudson III, James	T	6-5	313	2	Cincinnati	D4a-21	D4a-Cle-21
67	Martin, Wes	G	6-3	315	4	Indiana	FA-Was-23	D4-Was-19
72	Gossett, Colby	G	6-5	321	3	Appalachian State	FA-Atl-23	D6-Min-18
55	Pocic, Ethan	C	6-6	320	6	LSU	FA-Sea-22	D2b-Sea-17
77	Teller, Wyatt	G	6-4	315	5	Virginia Tech	T-Buf-19	D5-Buf-18
79	Wheatley Jr., Tyrone	T	6-6	320	1	Stony Brook	FA-22	FA-Chi-21
71	Wills Jr., Jedrick	T	6-4	307	3	Alabama	D1-20	D1-Cle-20

	DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
65	Dwumfour, Michael	DL	6-1	296	3	Rutgers	FA-23	FA-NYJ-21
96	Elliott, Jordan	DT	6-4	303	3	Missouri	D3a-20	D3a-Cle-20
95	Garrett, Myles	DE	6-4	272	6	Texas A&M	D1a-17	D1a-Cle-17
98	Hill, Trysten	DT	6-3	300	4	UCF	FA-Ari-23	D2-Dal-19
90	Hurst II, Maurice	DT	6-2	290	6	Michigan	FA-23	D5a-LV-18
92	Kamara, Sam	DE	6-0	272	2	Stony Brook	FA-22	FA-Chi-21
54	Okoronkwo, Ogbonnia	DE	6-2	253	5	Oklahoma	FA-Hou-23	D5b-LAR-18
64	Perry II, Roderick	DT	6-1	304	1	Illinois	FA-22	FA-Cle-22
57	Stille, Ben	DT	6-4	300	1	Nebraska	FA-22	FA-Mia-22
58	Thomas, Isaiah	DE	6-5	266	1	Oklahoma	D7a-22	D7a-Cle-22
93	Togiai, Tommy	DT	6-2	296	2	Ohio State	D4b-21	D4b-Cle-21
94	Tomlinson, Dalvin	DT	6-3	325	6	Alabama	FA-Min-23	D2-NYG-17
97	Winfrey, Perrion	DT	6-4	290	1	Oklahoma	D4a-22	D4a-Cle-22
99	Wright, Alex	DE	6-5	267	1	UAB	D3b-22	D3b-Cle-22

	LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
40	Adams, Matthew	LB	6-0	229	5	Houston	FA-Chi-23	D7a-Ind-18
42	Fields II, Tony	LB	6-0	222	2	West Virginia	D5a-21	D5a-Cle-21
49	Jackson, Storey	LB	6-2	225	1	Liberty	FA-22	FA-Dal-22
28	Owusu-Koramoah, J.	LB	6-2	221	2	Notre Dame	D2-21	D2-Cle-21
50	Phillips, Jacob	LB	6-3	228	3	LSU	D3b-20	D3b-Cle-20
19	Ragland, Reggie	LB	6-2	252	7	Alabama	FA-22	D2-Buf-16
	Smith, Za'Darius	OLB	6-4	272	8	Kentucky	FA-GB-22	D4a-Bal-15
44	Takitaki, Sione	LB	6-1	238	4	BYU	D3-19	D3-Cle-19
5	Walker Jr., Anthony	LB	6-1	235	6	Northwestern	FA-Ind-21	D5-Ind-17

	DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
37	Bell, D'Anthony	S	6-1	211	1	West Florida	FA-22	FA-Cle-22
36	Bolden, Bubba	S	6-2	200	1	Miami (Fla.)	FA-22	FA-Sea-22
22	Delpit, Grant	S	6-3	208	3	LSU	D2-20	D2-Cle-20
23	Emerson Jr., Martin	CB	6-2	201	1	Mississippi State	D3a-22	D3a-Cle-22
27	Ford, Mike	CB	6-0	199	4	SE Missouri State	FA-Atl-23	FA-Det-18
31	Graham Jr., Thomas	CB	5-11	197	1	Oregon	FA-22	D6-Chi-21
38	Green III, A.J.	CB	6-2	198	2	Oklahoma State	FA-21	FA-Cle-20
	McLeod Jr., Rodney	S	5-10	195	11	Virginia	FA-Ind-23	FA-LAR-12
20	Newsome II, Greg	CB	6-0	192	2	Northwestern	D1-21	D1-Cle-21
1	Thornhill, Juan	S	6-0	205	4	Virginia	FA-KC-23	D2b-KC-19
21	Ward, Denzel	CB	5-11	190	5	Ohio State	D1b-18	D1b-Cle-18

	SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
13	Bojorquez, Corey	P	6-0	217	5	New Mexico	FA-GB-22	FA-NE-18
16	Charlton, Joseph	P	6-5	190	3	South Carolina	CA-Cle-22	FA-Car-21
47	Hughlett, Charley	LS	6-4	248	8	UCF	FA-14	FA-Dal-12
3	York, Cade	K	6-1	206	1	LSU	D4b-22	D4b-Cle-22

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	2	Amari Cooper	18	David Bell
WR	11	Donovan Peoples-Jones	89	Cedric Tillman (R)
WR	8	Elijah Moore	19	Marquise Goodwin
LT	71	Jedrick Wills Jr.	66	James Hudson III
LG	75	Joel Bitonio	68	Michael Dunn
C	55	Ethan Pocic	56	Luke Wypler (R)
RG	77	Wyatt Teller	70	Drew Forbes
RT	78	Jack Conklin	74	Dawand Jones (R)
TE	85	David Njoku	84	Jordan Akins
QB	4	Deshaun Watson	15	Joshua Dobbs
RB	24	Nick Chubb	34	Jerome Ford

DEFENSE

DE	95	Myles Garrett	99	Alex Wright
DT	94	Dalvin Tomlinson	62	Siaki Ika (R)
DT	96	Jordan Elliott	90	Maurice Hurst II
DE	54	Ogbonnia Okoronkwo	91	Isaiah McGuire (R)
LB	5	Anthony Walker Jr.	44	Sione Takitaki
LB	28	Jeremiah Owusu-Koramoah	42	Tony Fields II
CB	21	Denzel Ward	38	A.J. Green III
CB	23	Martin Emerson Jr.	31	Thomas Graham Jr.
NB	20	Greg Newsome II	29	Cameron Mitchell (R)
SS	22	Grant Delpit	37	D'Anthony Bell
FS	1	Juan Thornhill	36	Bubba Bolden

SPECIALISTS

K	3	Cade York	KR 34	Jerome Ford
P	13	Corey Bojorquez	PR 16	Jaelon Darden

340

Nick Chubb led the NFL with a Defense-adjusted Yards Above Replacement (DYAR) of 340, per Football Outsiders. Chubb outpaced Josh Jacobs (308) of the Raiders and Miles Sanders (252), then of the Eagles, who came in second and third.

BROWNS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
3.	Cedric Tillman	WR	6-3	215	Tennessee
3.	Siaki Ika	DT	6-4	358	Baylor
4.	Dawand Jones	OT	6-8	375	Ohio State
4.	Isaiah McGuire	DE	6-4	271	Missouri
5.	D. Thompson-Robinson	QB	6-1	191	UCLA
5.	Cameron Mitchell	CB	6-0	195	Northwestern
6.	Luke Wypler	C	6-3	300	Ohio State

Cleveland didn't have a pick in the first two rounds, thanks to trades for Deshaun Watson and Elijah Moore. The Browns believe that Cedric Tillman's size and physicality give them something their evolving offense badly needed. Siaki Ika was added to help the run defense and could become a longtime starter if he improves his conditioning. Dawand Jones is a future option at right tackle, while Isaiah McGuire might be on the fastest track toward something resembling a full-time role of any of his rookie classmates. McGuire has enough size and natural strength to play both inside and outside in various pass-down packages. Cameron Mitchell will play special teams as a rookie and be prepped for possible late-season coverage duty.

STEELERS

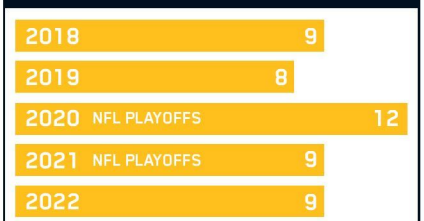
AFC NORTH FORECAST 3

2023 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 10	San Francisco	1:00
Sept. 18	Cleveland	8:15
Sept. 24	at Las Vegas	8:20
Oct. 1	at Houston	1:00
Oct. 8	Baltimore	1:00
Oct. 15	BYE	
Oct. 22	at L.A. Rams	4:05
Oct. 29	Jacksonville	1:00
Nov. 2	Tennessee	8:15
Nov. 12	Green Bay	1:00
Nov. 19	at Cleveland	1:00
Nov. 26	at Cincinnati	1:00
Dec. 3	Arizona	1:00
Dec. 7	New England	8:15
Dec. 17	at Indianapolis	TBD
Dec. 23	Cincinnati	4:25
Dec. 31	at Seattle	4:05
Jan. 7	at Baltimore	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND



THE COACHES

Head Coach: Mike Tomlin
Record With Team: 163-93-2
Career Record: 163-93-2
Offensive Coordinator: Matt Canada
Defensive Coordinator: Teryl Austin
Special Teams Coordinator: Danny Smith
Quarterbacks: Mike Sullivan
Running Backs: Eddie Faulkner
Wide Receivers: Frisman Jackson
Tight Ends: Alfredo Roberts
Offensive Line: Pat Meyer
Defensive Line: Karl Dunbar
Outside Linebackers: Denzel Martin
Inside Linebackers: Aaron Curry
Secondary: Grady Brown

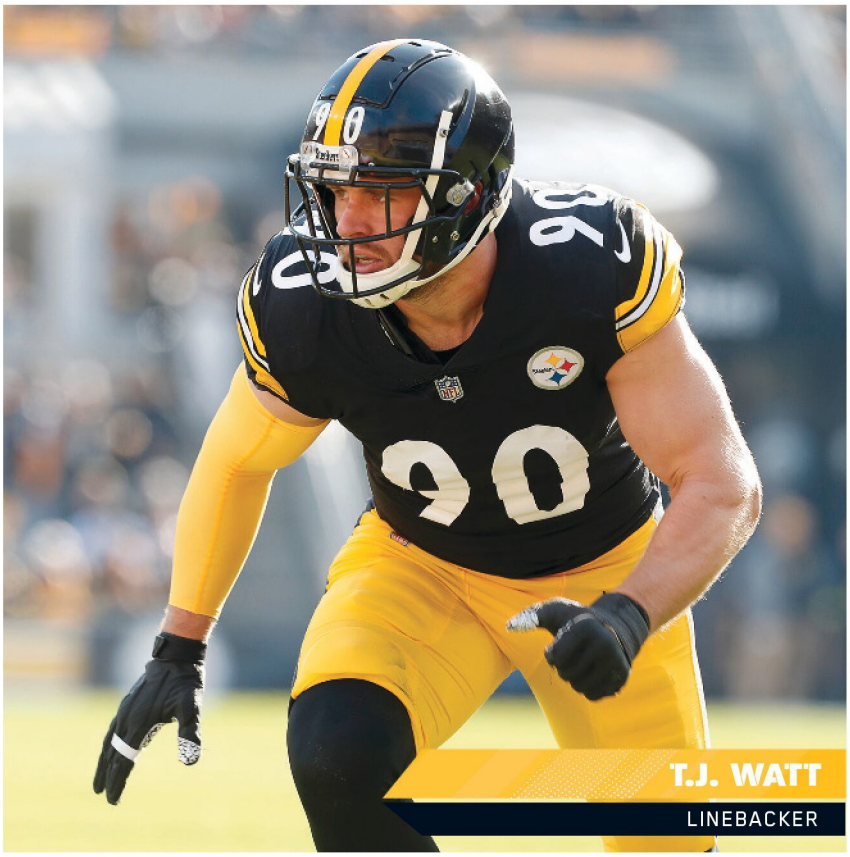
The Steelers just don't do losing seasons under Mike Tomlin. Even with uneven quarterback play in the first year of the post-Ben Roethlisberger era, an underwhelming running attack and a seemingly catastrophic injury to star pass rusher T.J. Watt, the Steelers scratched, clawed and willed their way to their 19th consecutive non-losing season and just barely missed the postseason. In Pittsburgh, that's considered a failure, but, in reality, it was yet another reason to believe that the Steelers annually boast one of the highest floors in the NFL. Playing in a stacked division within an ultra-stacked conference, that's what the Steelers will always have going for them until proven otherwise.

OFFENSE

It's Kenny Pickett's team in Pickett's town. Whether that means Pittsburgh's offense will be any better than the 26th-ranked scoring unit it was last season depends on whether Pickett makes a big step forward in his second year. As a rookie, he appeared in the majority of Pittsburgh's games (13) and was the starter in the majority of the team's nine wins. There were flashes of potential and an excitability factor that made plenty of Terrible-Towel-waving fans believe Pickett was the quarterback to lead them into the next era of Steelers football. But there were also moments of concern, including a seven-to-nine touchdown-interception ratio and multiple concussions that periodically put Pickett on the sidelines and raised concerns about his future. Still, there's an "it" factor to Pickett that players around him seem to love, and Pittsburgh is putting its full support behind the player it believes to be its quarterback of the long-term future.

The weapons surrounding Pickett are solid. Despite 147 targets, Diontae Johnson somehow never found the end zone in 2022, but he remains the solid leader of the Steelers' receiving corps. The real wild card is George Pickens, who is far and away the most talented wide receiver in Pittsburgh's locker room. He hauled in some of the best catches by anyone in the NFL last year and had steady production — 52 catches, 801 yards, four TDs — but he posted only one 100-yard game on the season. If Pickens makes his anticipated leap, Pittsburgh's passing game could be much more prolific than it was last year, when it ranked 24th in the league in yards per game and last in passing touchdowns (12). Veteran Allen Robinson II, acquired in a trade with the Rams, is a nice flier who could provide the Steelers with a viable third option if he's able to rebound from back-to-back lackluster campaigns. Pat Freiermuth quietly emerged as one of the NFL's most productive tight ends in 2022 (63 receptions, 732 yards) and should benefit greatly from the Steelers' (literally) big addition in the third round of the draft, as talented 6-foot-7, 264 pound Darnell Washington will provide another sizable option for Pickett.

Najee Harris simply hasn't had much running room since he joined the Steelers as a first-round pick in 2021. Though he boasts the traits of a top-end running back and regularly creates highlight-reel runs — typically involving a stiff-arm or two — he's averaged fewer than four yards per carry in each of his first two seasons. Harris labored through a foot injury throughout parts of 2022, and it showed, but he put together some of his best performances during the second half of the year, which can be attributed to both his personal health and the improved chemistry of Pittsburgh's offensive line at the time. The Steelers beefed up their interior with the addition of Eagles guard Isaac Seumalo in free agency and the selection of Broderick Jones in the first round of the NFL Draft.



CHARLES LECLAIRE-USA TODAY SPORTS

Jones, a mountain of a man at 6-5 and 311 pounds, is poised to replace Dan Moore Jr. on Pickett's blind side, while Seumalo likely will take over Kevin Dotson's spot at left guard. No matter how the unit shakes out, the Steelers should come out with a much more ferocious offensive line than they've had in the recent past.

DEFENSE

It will be more of the same for the Steelers up front in 2023, and that's not necessarily a bad thing when that means a player like Cameron Heyward will be entrenched for a 13th consecutive season. Heyward not only has continued to be incredibly productive — he's coming off his second straight double-digit sack season — but he's also showing no signs of slowing down. He's missed just a handful of games since an injury-shortened 2016 campaign and hasn't missed any in each of the past two years. Heyward will be playing alongside the freshly re-signed Larry Ogunjobi, who is coming off one of his best seasons as a pro, and a mix of solid rotational players who will compete for starting reps. That group includes nose tackles Montravius Adams and rookie Keeanu Benton, who will compete for a starting role, and key depth pieces such as Armon Watts and Breiden Fehoko, who were added in free agency to make the Steelers even deeper at an area of consistent strength.

There is, perhaps, no player in the NFL who means more to his defense than Watt, who enters his seventh season with the Steelers and is vying to bounce back from an injury-affected 2022. He missed seven games with a left pectoral injury suffered in Week 1, and Pittsburgh was 1-6 without him (8-2 with him in the lineup). Watt is an elite pass rusher who demands attention from multiple players. Even with that added coverage, he still produces some of the best numbers of anyone in the NFL. It also lifts up the players around him, whether it be his fellow linebackers, such as Alex Highsmith on the opposite side of the field, or the playmakers at defensive back, such as All-Pro safety Minkah Fitzpatrick, who are always at their best when Watt is on the field. Outside of 2022, Watt has been the picture of health, missing just a couple of games in the previous five seasons.

Pittsburgh's secondary got the most overhaul of any unit of the defense, and there are a couple of big names who will play prominent roles alongside Fitzpatrick. The first is Patrick Peterson, whose best football is definitely behind him but should still be considered a rock-solid addition at cornerback — a position at which Pittsburgh has struggled with inconsistency. The other side could be regularly manned by another new face that has quite the familiar name. Penn State's Joey Porter Jr. — the son of former Steelers LB Joey Porter — was the first selection by any team on Day 2 of the NFL Draft and likely will be competing with the likes of veteran Ahkello Witherspoon and Levi Wallace for a starting role. They'll try to fill the shoes of Cameron Sutton, who played solid football for the Steelers over the past six seasons but left for the Lions in free agency. The Steelers also lost strong safety Terrell Edmunds, who is now across the state with the Eagles. Former Buc Keanu Neal and Damontae Kazee should be able to fill the void without much dropoff.

SPECIALISTS

Typically ultra reliable, Chris Boswell struggled in 2022 and might need to compete at training camp to maintain his role. Though he was perfect on extra points, Boswell missed eight of 28 field goals last season, the most of his eight-year career. The situation is a bit more stable at punter, as Pressley Harvin III showed major improvement from his rookie year to his second season and is expected to be even better in 2023.

FINAL ANALYSIS

The Steelers are never out of it. That much is clear. It just won't be easy for them to get back to the playoffs because of the competition they'll face throughout their own division and the entire conference. If they do, it will happen because of the rock-steady coaching of Tomlin, another banner year from Watt and a big sophomore leap from Pickett.

2022 RESULTS (9-8)

Sept. 11	at Cincinnati (ot)	W	23-20
Sept. 18	New England	L	14-17
Sept. 22	at Cleveland	L	17-29
Oct. 2	N.Y. Jets	L	20-24
Oct. 9	at Buffalo	L	3-38
Oct. 16	Tampa Bay	W	20-18
Oct. 23	at Miami	L	10-16
Oct. 30	at Philadelphia	L	13-35
Nov. 13	New Orleans	W	20-10
Nov. 20	Cincinnati	L	30-37
Nov. 28	at Indianapolis	W	24-17
Dec. 4	at Atlanta	W	19-16
Dec. 11	Baltimore	L	14-16
Dec. 18	at Carolina	W	24-16
Dec. 24	Las Vegas	W	13-10
Jan. 1	at Baltimore	W	16-13
Jan. 8	Cleveland	W	28-14

2022 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	322.6	23	11
Rushing	121.9	16	6
Passing	200.5	24	13
Scoring	18.1	26	11
Third Down %	44.9	7	4
EPA/Play	0.012	14	7
TO Differential	+4	T9	T5

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	330.4	13	7
Rushing	108.1	9	8
Passing	222.3	19	10
Scoring	20.4	11	6
Interceptions	20	T1	1
Sacks	40	T14	T6
EPA/Play	0.021	23	13

2022 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Kenny Pickett	389	245	2,404	7	9
Mitchell Trubisky	180	117	1,252	4	5

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Najee Harris	272	1,034	3.8	7
Jaylen Warren	77	379	4.9	1
Kenny Pickett	55	237	4.3	3

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Diontae Johnson	86	882	10.3	0
Pat Freiermuth	63	732	11.6	2
George Pickens	52	801	15.4	4
Najee Harris	41	229	5.6	3
Chase Claypool	32	311	9.7	1

KICKING: Chris Boswell, 20-28 FGs, 18-18 PAT, 78 points
TACKLES: Myles Jack, 104; Minkah Fitzpatrick, 96
SACKS: Alex Highsmith, 14.5; Cameron Heyward, 10.5
INTERCEPTIONS: Minkah Fitzpatrick, 6; Levi Wallace, 4

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

OH, BROTHER Move over, Philadelphia. Pittsburgh is the real city of brotherly love. With their fourth-round selection of Wisconsin LB Nick Herbig, the Steelers gave themselves yet another set of brothers. They now boast a whopping three, as Herbig will team up with his brother, Nate, an offensive guard. They'll join the seasoned brotherly tandems of Connor and Cameron Heyward and T.J. and Derek Watt. The most unbelievable part: The Steelers actually decreased their total of brothers on the roster, going from four sets in 2022 to three this upcoming season. "Me and him talked about this since we were little kids," Herbig told reporters after the draft. "We grew up, we shared the same dream, we worked out together, we do everything together. That's my best friend."

MEANT TO BE The Steelers made the pick everyone wanted to see when they took Penn State CB **Joey Porter Jr.**, to kick off the second round of the 2023 NFL Draft. Simply put, it was meant to be, and a photo proving it went viral shortly after the pick to prove it. The photo shows Porter Jr.'s dad, Joey Porter, the longtime beloved Steelers LB, holding his two sons, Joey and Jacob, after Pittsburgh's win over Seattle in Super Bowl XL. "He's gonna make the name his, he's going to add legacy to the name with the things that he can do and the things that he's going to do," Porter Sr. told ESPN after the draft. "It's really his turn, and I'm just sitting back watching."

READY FOR THE AIRWAVES? Over the past year, the Kelce Bros. have launched and maintained one of the most popular podcasts in sports. Could the Watt Bros. be next? That's up to T.J. "My brother and I have talked about it," said J.J. Watt, the future Hall of Famer who recently retired, in a conversation with *Sports Illustrated*. "It's hard when you're an active player. … If you do a podcast and lose that week, you still have to go on and talk about random things. All that's going on in your head is, I want to go back out there."

SCOUTING THE STEELERS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP PITTSBURGH "Kenny Pickett showed me enough to believe in his upside as a starting quarterback. I liked his composure and accuracy. Is he a winning quarterback? Not quite, but there's still potential, and he has displayed he can play. I like his intangibles, too. … George Pickens' acrobatic catches are special. … Allen Robinson II needed a change of scenery. He was a washout with the Rams. … Pat Freiermuth is such a great fit for how the Steelers use the tight end position. … Broderick Jones had one of our highest grades on our draft board. We didn't have him ranked far behind Paris Johnson Jr. … Isaac Seumalo should give the Steelers a lot of push on inside runs, and he can pull a bit, too. … Najee Harris has something to prove. He has all the talent it takes to play at a higher level. … Mitch Trubisky is not a bad backup. You just don't want to have to start him. … The right side of their line (James Daniels, Chukwuma Okorafor) gets decent push. … Every year, Cameron Heyward answers the bell. … T.J. Watt is relentless. He just keeps chasing and chasing, and he usually catches what he's going after. He's a lot like his big brother (J.J. Watt). … Elandon Roberts has everything you want in a linebacker except for height. … Alex Highsmith's pass rushing toolbox keeps growing. … Minkah Fitzpatrick is the best safety the Steelers have had since Troy Polamalu. … Patrick Peterson has enough left in the tank to give the Steelers a quality season. … Cole Holcomb is a thumper. … Joey Porter Jr. should live up to his dad's legacy. He's outstanding in coverage and tracks the football very well."

KIRBY LEE/USA TODAY SPORTS

2023 STEELERS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS.	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
8 Pickett, Kenny	QB	6-3	220	1	Pittsburgh	D1-22	D1-Pit-22
10 Trubisky, Mitch	QB	6-2	220	6	North Carolina	FA-Buf-22	D1-Chi-17
RUNNING BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
22 Harris, Najee	RB	6-1	242	2	Alabama	D1-21	D1-Pit-21
38 Huntley, Jason	RB	5-9	195	2	New Mexico State	FA-22	D5-Det-20
26 McFarland Jr., Anthony	RB	5-8	193	3	Maryland	D4a-20	D4a-Pit-20
33 Teague, Master	RB	5-11	220	1	Ohio State	FA-23	FA-Chi-22
30 Warren, Jaylen	RB	5-8	215	1	Oklahoma State	FA-22	FA-Pit-22
RECEIVERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
19 Austin III, Calvin	WR	5-9	162	1	Memphis	D4-22	D4-Pit-22
13 Boykin, Miles	WR	6-4	220	4	Notre Dame	W-Bal-22	D3-Bal-19
84 Bradley, Ja'Marcus	WR	6-1	198	2	Louisiana	FA-22	FA-Cle-20
82 Fitzpatrick, Dez	WR	6-2	208	1	Louisville	FA-23	D4a-Ten-21
88 Freiermuth, Pat	TE	6-5	258	2	Penn State	D2-21	D2-Pit-21
81 Gentry, Zach	TE	6-8	265	4	Michigan	D5-19	D5-Pit-19
83 Heyward, Connor	TE	6-0	230	1	Michigan State	D6-22	D6-Pit-22
18 Johnson, Diontae	WR	5-10	183	4	Toledo	D3a-19	D3a-Pit-19
17 Miller, Anthony	WR	5-11	199	5	Memphis	FA-21	D2-Chi-18
89 Olszewski, Gunner	WR	6-0	190	4	Bemidji State	FA-NE-22	FA-NE-19
14 Pickens, George	WR	6-3	200	1	Georgia	D2-22	D2-Pit-22
11 Robinson II, Allen	WR	6-2	210	9	Penn State	T-LAR-23	D2a-Jac-14
15 White, Cody	WR	6-3	215	2	Michigan State	FA-20	FA-KC-20
87 Williams, Rodney	TE	6-4	235	1	Tennessee-Martin	FA-22	FA-Den-22
OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
67 Clark, Le'Raven	T	6-5	319	7	Texas Tech	FA-Ten-23	D3-Ind-16
61 Cole, Mason	OL	6-5	298	5	Michigan	FA-Min-22	D3-Ari-18
78 Daniels, James	OL	6-4	327	5	Iowa	FA-Chi-22	D2a-Chi-18
69 Dotson, Kevin	OL	6-4	321	3	Louisiana	D4b-20	D4b-Pit-20
68 Dunkle, William	G	6-5	330	1	San Diego State	FA-22	FA-Phi-22
53 Green, Kendrick	G	6-4	315	2	Illinois	D3-21	D3-Pit-21
71 Herbig, Nate	G	6-4	334	4	Stanford	FA-NYJ-23	FA-Phi-19
62 McCollum, Ryan	C	6-5	300	2	Texas A&M	W-Det-22	FA-Hou-21
65 Moore Jr., Dan	T	6-5	315	2	Texas A&M	D4a-21	D4a-Pit-21
76 Okorafor, Chukwuma	OL	6-6	320	5	Western Michigan	D3b-18	D3b-Pit-18
73 Seumalo, Isaac	G	6-4	303	7	Oregon State	FA-Phi-23	D3-Phi-16
DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
57 Adams Sr., Montravius	DT	6-4	304	6	Auburn	FA-21	D3-GB-17
96 Fehoko, Breiden	DL	6-3	300	2	LSU	FA-LAC-23	FA-LAC-20
97 Heyward, Cameron	DT	6-5	295	12	Ohio State	D1-11	D1-Pit-11
98 Leal, DeMarvin	DE	6-4	290	1	Texas A&M	D3-22	D3-Pit-22
92 Loudermilk, Isaiahh	DL	6-7	293	2	Wisconsin	D5-21	D5-Pit-21
91 Marshall, Jonathan	DL	6-3	310	2	Arkansas	W-NYJ-22	D6c-NYJ-21
99 Ogunjobi, Larry	DT	6-3	305	6	Charlotte	FA-22	D3-Cle-17
68 Watts, Armon	DL	6-5	307	4	Arkansas	FA-Chi-23	D6a-Min-19
79 Wren, Renell	DT	6-5	315	3	Arizona State	FA-22	D4b-Cin-19
LINEBACKERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
54 Crowder, Tae	LB	6-1	235	3	Georgia	W-NYG-22	D7-NYG-20
45 Egbule, Emeke	LB	6-2	245	4	Houston	FA-22	D6-LAC-19
56 Highsmith, Alex	LB	6-4	242	3	Charlotte	D3-20	D3-Pit-20
55 Holcomb, Cole	LB	6-1	240	4	North Carolina	FA-Was-23	D5b-Was-19
44 Muse, Tanner	LB	6-2	227	3	Clemson	FA-Sea-23	D3-LV-20
50 Roberts, Elandon	LB	6-1	238	7	Houston	FA-Mia-23	D6b-NE-16
93 Robinson, Mark	LB	5-11	235	1	Ole Miss	D7a-22	D7a-Pit-22
53 Roche, Quincy	LB	6-3	245	1	Miami (Fla.)	FA-23	D6-Pit-21
49 Russell, Chapelle	LB	6-1	230	3	Temple	FA-22	D7-TB-20
90 Watt, T.J.	LB	6-4	252	6	Wisconsin	D1-17	D1-Pit-17
DEFENSIVE BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
33 Dawson, Duke	CB	5-10	198	4	Florida	FA-22	D2-NE-18
39 Fitzpatrick, Minkah	S	6-1	207	5	Alabama	T-Mia-19	D1-Mia-18
38 Harper, Madre	CB	6-1	196	2	Southern Illinois	FA-23	FA-LV-20
23 Kazee, Damontae	S	5-11	174	6	San Diego State	FA-22	D5-Atl-17
28 Killebrew, Miles	S	6-2	222	7	Southern Utah	D4-16	D4-Pit-16
31 Neal, Keanu	S	6-0	211	7	Florida	FA-TB-23	D1-Atl-16
17 Nelson, Scott	S	6-2	203	1	Wisconsin	FA-22	FA-Sea-22
21 Norwood, Tre	DB	6-0	194	2	Oklahoma	D7a-21	D7a-Pit-21
20 Peterson, Patrick	CB	6-1	198	12	LSU	FA-Min-23	D1-Ari-11
42 Pierre, James	CB	6-2	185	3	Florida Atlantic	FA-20	FA-Pit-20
37 Riley, Elijah	S	6-0	205	3	Army	W-NYJ-22	FA-Phi-20
41 Robinson, Kenny	S	6-2	200	2	West Virginia	FA-23	D5-Car-20
34 Sullivan, Chandon	CB	5-11	189	5	Georgia State	FA-Min-23	FA-Phi-18
29 Wallace, Levi	CB	6-0	179	5	Alabama	FA-Buf-22	FA-Buf-18
30 Wilcox, Chris	CB	6-2	195	1	BYU	FA-23	D7-TB-21
25 Witherspoon, Ahkello	CB	6-2	195	6	Colorado	T-Sea-21	D3a-SF-17
SPECIALISTS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
9 Boswell, Chris	K	6-2	185	8	Rice	FA-15	FA-Hou-14
6 Harvin III, Pressley	P	6-0	255	2	Georgia Tech	D7b-21	D7b-Pit-21
4 Mann, Braden	P	5-11	198	3	Texas A&M	W-NYJ-23	D6-NYJ-20
46 Kuntz, Christian	LS	6-1	228	2	Duquesne	FA-20	FA-NE-17

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	18	Diontae Johnson	19	Calvin Austin III
WR	14	George Pickens	89	Gunner Olszewski
WR	11	Allen Robinson II	13	Miles Boykin
LT	77	Broderick Jones (R)	65	Dan Moore Jr.
LG	73	Isaac Seumalo	69	Kevin Dotson
C	61	Mason Cole	62	Ryan McCollum
RG	78	James Daniels	71	Nate Herbig
RT	76	Chukwuma Okorafor	67	Le'Raven Clark
TE	88	Pat Freiermuth	81	Zach Gentry
QB	8	Kenny Pickett	10	Mitch Trubisky
RB	22	Najee Harris	30	Jaylen Warren

DEFENSE

DE	99	Larry Ogunjobi	98	DeMarvin Leal
DT	95	Keeanu Benton (R)	57	Montravius Adams Sr.
DE	97	Cameron Heyward	92	Isaiahh Loudermilk
SLB	56	Alex Highsmith	53	Quincy Roche
ILB	55	Cole Holcomb	54	Tae Crowder
ILB	50	Elandon Roberts	93	Mark Robinson
WLB	90	T.J. Watt	45	Emeke Egbule
CB	20	Patrick Peterson	29	Levi Wallace
CB	25	Ahkello Witherspoon	24	Joey Porter Jr. (R)
SS	23	Damontae Kazee	31	Keanu Neal
FS	39	Minkah Fitzpatrick	21	Tre Norwood

SPECIALISTS

K	9	Chris Boswell	KR	89	Gunner Olszewski
P	6	Pressley Harvin III	PR	89	Gunner Olszewski

11.4

Although the defense was the stronger unit in 2022 for Pittsburgh, the Steelers averaged an AFC-worst 11.4 yards per completion allowed.

STEELERS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: A-

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Broderick Jones	OT	6-5	311	Georgia
2.	Joey Porter Jr.	CB	6-2	193	Penn State
2.	Keeanu Benton	DL	6-3	312	Wisconsin
3.	Darnell Washington	TE	6-7	264	Georgia
4.	Nick Herbig	LB	6-2	240	Wisconsin
7.	Cory Trice Jr.	CB	6-3	206	Purdue
7.	Spencer Anderson	OG	6-5	305	Maryland

The Steelers left nothing to chance when it came to fortifying their offensive line, which has been one of the team's biggest issues for multiple years. Pittsburgh made the uncharacteristic move to trade up to nab Broderick Jones, who should be the final answer to the years of questions the Steelers have had at left tackle. The Steelers made the most of the second-round pick they acquired in a trade last year for WR Chase Claypool by keeping it in the family with the selection of Joey Porter Jr., the son of Steelers' great Joey Porter. The team made another family connection in the fourth round, landing Nick Herbig, who is the younger brother of Nate Herbig, a reserve guard for the Steelers. Keep an eye out for Darnell Washington — it's hard to miss him. He immediately becomes a big option for second-year QB Kenny Pickett in the red zone.

HOU TEXANS

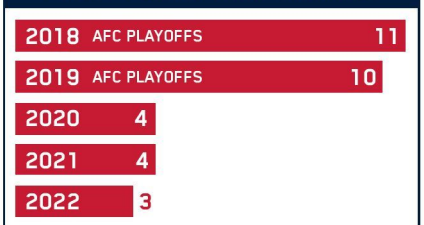
AFC SOUTH FORECAST 3

2023 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 10	at Baltimore	1:00
Sept. 17	Indianapolis	1:00
Sept. 24	at Jacksonville	1:00
Oct. 1	Pittsburgh	1:00
Oct. 8	at Atlanta	1:00
Oct. 15	New Orleans	1:00
Oct. 22	BYE	
Oct. 29	at Carolina	1:00
Nov. 5	Tampa Bay	1:00
Nov. 12	at Cincinnati	1:00
Nov. 19	Arizona	1:00
Nov. 26	Jacksonville	1:00
Dec. 3	Denver	4:05
Dec. 10	New York Jets	1:00
Dec. 17	at Tennessee	1:00
Dec. 24	Cleveland	1:00
Dec. 31	Tennessee	1:00
Jan. 7	at Indianapolis	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND



THE COACHES

Head Coach: DeMeco Ryans
Record With Team: 0-0
Career Record: 0-0
Offensive Coordinator: Bobby Slowik
Defensive Coordinator: Matt Burke
Special Teams Coordinator: Frank Ross
Quarterbacks: Jerrod Johnson
Running Backs: Danny Barrett
Wide Receivers/Pass Game Coordinator: Ben McDaniels
Tight Ends: Jake Moreland
Offensive Line: Chris Strausser
Defensive Line: Jacques Cesaire
Linebackers: Chris Kiffin
Cornerbacks: Dino Vasso
Safeties: Stephen Adegoke

Texans general manager Nick Caserio's two-year rebuild phase is over. If anyone asked what the franchise's needs were entering the 2021 and 2022 offseasons, the answer was simple: everything. But the Texans filled major positional holes in Caserio's first big-budget free agency cycle then addressed the remainder within the team's most aggressive draft in history. Caserio executed a team-record eight draft-day trades, which included a stunning move with the Cardinals to jump from No. 12 to No. 3 and select Alabama edge rusher Will Anderson Jr. after picking Ohio State quarterback C.J. Stroud No. 2 overall.

Bold? Certainly. The Texans surrendered one of their two 2024 first-round picks in the deal. Caserio essentially has spent all of the draft picks gained by trading former franchise quarterback Deshaun Watson to the Browns. But Caserio has no guarantee he'll survive beyond the 2023 season. He fired his second head coach in two seasons, Lovie Smith, and typically hands-off owner Cal McNair was heavily involved in the process of hiring former 49ers defensive coordinator DeMeco Ryans. The former Texans linebacker made it easy. Ryans called it his "dream job," and as the team's fourth head coach in four seasons, he's been given a six-year contract to make the Texans the perennial playoff contender they became during the final seasons of his playing career. Caserio acknowledges "the clock is ticking" for his process to yield wins. But the Ryans hire, the free agency cycle and the draft have stirred fans from their dormancy. The Texans are relevant again.

OFFENSE

Ryans has entrusted fixing an offense that averaged the NFL's fewest yards per drive in each of the last two seasons to first-time play-caller Bobby Slowik, a former Pro Football Focus analyst who learned the West Coast system as a defensive assistant under Mike Shanahan and as an offensive assistant and passing game coordinator under Kyle Shanahan.

The 2023 Texans offense obviously will resemble the roots of the 49ers system. Its greatest strength is a powerful tandem of Dameon Pierce and Devin Singletary, two downhill running backs who should gain yards in significant chunks behind an upgraded offensive line that is switching to a more aggressive, off-the-ball style that includes zone-blocking schemes and plenty of pulling blockers. But the explosiveness of Houston's offense depends on Stroud's ability to adapt to a new system and a collection of aging, often-injured or unproven receivers.

Laremy Tunsil and Tytus Howard afford Stroud perhaps the best offensive tackle duo in the NFL, and the signing of former Cowboys tight end Dalton Schultz, who has averaged 10 yards per catch in the last two seasons, should give Stroud an established security blanket. But there is no clarity yet about how the receiving corps will be deployed. Slowik likely will reflect San Francisco's positionless deployment of receivers, mixing combinations in pursuit of mismatches. Robert Woods, 31, will be the reliable veteran. Rookies Tank Dell and Xavier Hutchinson will push for playing time, but the competition is more indicative of the lack of depth at the position than a surplus of it.

DEFENSE

Ryans was the architect of the NFL's top defense last year, directing a sturdy 49ers unit that included three former first-round picks on the defensive line.

Ryans believes in an aggressive, attacking line, and his hiring of defensive coordinator Matt Burke reflects an intention to install a scheme that resembles a line of parallel railroad tracks running toward the QB. It's a scheme that was most disruptive under Burke's mentor, Jim Schwartz, a longtime defensive coordinator and former Lions head coach. Viewed through this lens, Houston's trade up to draft Anderson makes perfect sense. The Texans lacked an elite force on the defensive edge, and Ryans intends to launch his new 6-foot-4, 243-pound missile repeatedly into opposing backfields.

Maliek Collins has been Houston's most disruptive defender as a 3-tech defensive tackle, and signing former Jets tackle Sheldon Rankins to pair with Collins gives the Texans a formidable interior. Anderson will demand extra blockers, and the Texans hope a competition between 34-year-old Jerry Hughes, the oft-injured Jonathan Greenard and fourth-round rookie Dylan Horton will yield a reliable partner for Anderson. It wouldn't be surprising to see Horton, a speedy former safety and linebacker, gain more snaps as the season progresses.

The Texans surrendered the most rushing yards in team history last year (170.2 yards per game, last in the NFL), and there will be a fierce position battle to find out who will start next to linebacker Christian Harris in the team's standard nickel packages. Expect Christian Kirksey to be a cap casualty with $5.2 million in potential savings. Former Pro Bowlers Denzel Perryman and Cory Littleton both have battled injuries, but Perryman, a former Raiders captain, possesses the range and penchant for run-stopping the Texans need.

If Ryans fixes the front, the Texans should hover near the league lead in turnovers with a collection of young, instinctive defensive backs that includes cornerback Derek Stingley Jr. and safety Jalen Pitre. By signing Jimmie Ward, who played safety and nickel for Ryans in San Francisco, the Texans can blend Pitre and Ward into disguised responsibilities that should confound opposing quarterbacks.

DAMEON PIERCE
RUNNING BACK

TROY TAORMINA-USA TODAY SPORTS

SPECIALISTS

If there's any aspect of this franchise that has played at a playoff-worthy level, it's the special teams. Ka'imi Fairbairn hit a career-best 93.5 percent of his field-goal attempts last season (29-of-31), including 6-of-6 from 50-plus yards, and he made all 24 of his point-after attempts. Cameron Johnston led the AFC with 37 punts downed inside the opponent's 20. The Texans have a reliable punt returner in Desmond King II, who averaged 9.4 yards per return last season. But they'll seek more explosiveness. Rookie Tank Dell, who scored touchdowns on both punt and kickoff returns at the University of Houston, should have the inside track on those jobs with the Texans.

FINAL ANALYSIS

This is not a roster that can be counted on to produce the league's worst numbers anymore. With a first-time head coach and offensive play-caller, it's not one that should be expected to produce the league's best numbers, either. It will be surprising if Stroud doesn't start Week 1, given the team's immense issues at the position last year with Davis Mills. So there will be growing pains. But the Texans now rejoin the majority of the league in a constant churn of developing and repairing certain positions. Fans in Houston shouldn't expect a playoff push until at least 2024, but there should be significant signs of life.

2022 RESULTS (3-13-1)

Sept.	11	Indianapolis (ot)	T	20-20
Sept.	18	at Denver	L	9-16
Sept.	25	at Chicago	L	20-23
Oct.	2	L.A. Chargers	L	24-34
Oct.	9	at Jacksonville	W	13-6
Oct.	23	at Las Vegas	L	20-38
Oct.	30	Tennessee	L	10-17
Nov.	3	Philadelphia	L	17-29
Nov.	13	at N.Y. Giants	L	16-24
Nov.	20	Washington	L	10-23
Nov.	27	at Miami	L	15-30
Dec.	4	Cleveland	L	14-27
Dec.	11	at Dallas	L	23-27
Dec.	18	Kansas City (ot)	L	24-30
Dec.	24	at Tennessee	W	19-14
Jan.	1	Jacksonville	L	3-31
Jan.	8	Indianapolis	W	32-31

2022 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	283.5	31	16
Rushing	86.8	31	16
Passing	196.7	25	14
Scoring	17.0	T30	T14
Third Down %	30.3	31	15
EPA/Play	-0.168	32	16
TO Differential	-1	T16	T8

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	379.5	30	16
Rushing	170.2	32	16
Passing	209.3	10	4
Scoring	24.7	27	15
Interceptions	16	T7	4
Sacks	39	T18	T10
EPA/Play	0.010	18	9

2022 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Davis Mills	479	292	3,118	17	15
Kyle Allen	78	46	416	2	4

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Dameon Pierce	220	939	4.3	4
Dare Ogunbowale	42	123	2.9	1

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Brandin Cooks	57	699	12.3	3
Chris Moore	48	548	11.4	2
Jordan Akins	37	495	13.4	5
Nico Collins	37	481	13.0	2
Rex Burkhead	37	204	5.5	1
Dameon Pierce	30	165	5.5	1

KICKING: Ka'imi Fairbairn, 29-31 FGs, 24-24 PAT, 111 points
TACKLES: Jalen Pitre, 147; Jonathan Owens, 125
SACKS: Jerry Hughes, 9.0; Ogbonnia Okoronkwo, 5.0
INTERCEPTIONS: Jalen Pitre, 5; three tied with 5

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

ACTIVE DRAFT CYCLE It's unlikely the Texans will ever be as active in the draft as they were this year. General manager Nick Caserio executed a team-record eight draft-day trades, which doubled the record he set the year before. Only **C.J. Stroud** and Jarrett Patterson, the team's No. 201 pick, were selected without the use of a trade.

DEAD MONEY NO MORE After leading the NFL with $65.5 million in dead money last season, the Texans finally entered an offseason with a flexible cap space budget this season. There is even more untapped money in the future. The Texans have the highest projected cap space of 2024 ($147.4 million). They'll have another busy offseason next year, when they can sign big-name free agents.

LIVING THE DREAM Stroud shared his vivid memories of draft night: "I walk on the stage, and I see some of my friends. I'm just like, man, I just got picked. I do the interview. I'm walking down. I go say, 'What's up?' to the Texans fans. They said I was the only one willing to do that, to go down. It's so cool. I look up, and it says the pick is in, it's the Texans. I'm like, I just got picked. That can't be true. They're like, no, they just traded. I'm like, oh, they're going to get Will [Anderson Jr.]."

PERFECT FIT Stroud's fellow first-round pick, Anderson says his selection by the Texans is the perfect fit of player and team. "I want to play for somebody that's got the same way I think. So, when I came here and I talked to Coach Ryans (on my pre-draft visit), I was like, I've got to be here," Anderson says. "The same exact mindset, the same mentality, what he's trying to preach, everything. That's what I'm all about, and that's what I want to do. It's going to be a lot of hard work. Nothing is given to me. That's the way I like it. I want to go out there and earn it. I want to go out and compete. The mindset he has and the mentality and the standard and the expectation, that's everything I'm about. That's why it was so easy for me to say, I want to be a Houston Texan. I want to go and play for that man right there."

SCOUTING THE TEXANS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP HOUSTON "Nick Caserio sent a lot of valuable draft capital to the Cardinals to get Will Anderson Jr. Anderson was the highest-ranked player on their draft board regardless of position and first on most NFL teams' draft boards. … C.J. Stroud is prototypical for size, arm strength and accuracy. They liked his film, attitude and intelligence. … DeMeco Ryans is a breath of fresh air whose homecoming is being hailed as a conquering hero rejoining the Texans. … They don't have a true No. 1 wide receiver. Robert Woods isn't that kind of guy. … Nico Collins, when healthy, is great on contested catches. Lot of length working in his favor. … Laremy Tunsil is an elite pass protector, and he got paid like one: $25 million a year. … Kenyon Green had a rough rookie year, pushed around, too heavy and had offseason knee surgery. … Shaq Mason is a big upgrade over A.J. Cann at right guard. … Tank Dell is explosive as a receiver and return man. He's tiny, but he can play. … Dameon Pierce is a runner no one likes tackling. … Sheldon Rankins and Maliek Collins are a strong DT tandem. … Derek Stingley Jr. has elite cover skills. … I really like Jalen Pitre's game. He just needs to be a surer tackler. … Denzel Perryman brings the pain. … Christian Harris is a true run-and-hit linebacker. … Jonathan Greenard's pass-rushing skills are a big plus. … The kicking game and coverage units are really good. Frank Ross is one of the best special teams coaches."

ADAM CAIRNS/USA TODAY SPORTS

2023 TEXANS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS.	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
18 Keenum, Case	QB	6-1	215	10	Houston	FA-Buf-23	FA-Hou-12
10 Mills, Davis	QB	6-4	225	2	Stanford	D3a-21	D3a-Hou-21
16 Perry, E.J.	QB	6-2	210	1	Brown	W-Jac-23	FA-Jac-22
RUNNING BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
22 Boone, Mike	RB	5-10	206	5	Cincinnati	FA-Den-23	FA-Min-18
27 Doaks, Gerrid	RB	5-11	228	1	Cincinnati	FA-22	D7-Mia-21
34 Hairston, Troy	FB	5-11	245	1	Central Michigan	FA-22	FA-Hou-22
33 Ogunbowale, Dare	RB	5-11	205	4	Wisconsin	FA-Jac-22	FA-Hou-17
31 Pierce, Dameon	RB	5-10	218	1	Florida	D4a-22	D4a-Hou-22
26 Singletary, Devin	RB	5-7	203	4	Florida Atlantic	FA-Buf-23	D3a-Buf-19
RECEIVERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
14 Bachman, Alex	WR	6-0	190	1	Wake Forest	FA-22	FA-LAR-19
47 Beck, Andrew	TE	6-3	255	4	Texas	FA-Den-23	FA-NE-19
85 Brown, Noah	WR	6-2	215	6	Ohio State	FA-Dal-23	D7b-Dal-17
17 Camp, Jalen	WR	6-2	220	1	Georgia Tech	FA-21	D6-Jac-21
12 Collins, Nico	WR	6-4	215	2	Michigan	D3b-21	D3b-Hou-21
89 Johnson III, Johnny	WR	6-1	199	1	Oregon	FA-22	FA-Hou-22
9 Jordan, Brevin	TE	6-3	245	2	Miami (Fla.)	D5a-21	D5a-Hou-21
8 Metchie III, John	WR	5-11	187	1	Alabama	D2b-22	D2b-Hou-22
84 Quitoriano, Teagan	TE	6-6	258	1	Oregon State	D5b-22	D5b-Hou-22
3 Rodgers, Amari	WR	5-9	212	2	Clemson	W-GB-22	D3-GB-21
86 Schreck, Mason	TE	6-5	252	3	Buffalo	FA-22	D7-Cin-17
83 Schultz, Dalton	TE	6-5	255	5	Stanford	FA-Dal-23	D4b-Dal-18
82 Sims, Steven	WR	5-10	176	3	Kansas	FA-Pit-23	FA-Was-19
87 Tomlinson, Eric	TE	6-6	263	7	UTEP	FA-Den-23	FA-Phi-15
2 Woods, Robert	WR	6-0	195	10	USC	FA-Ten-23	D2a-Buf-13
OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
76 Deculus, Austin	OL	6-5	321	1	LSU	D6-22	D6-Hou-22
63 Deiter, Michael	OL	6-6	315	4	Wisconsin	FA-Mia-23	D3-Mia-19
59 Green, Kenyon	OL	6-4	323	1	Texas A&M	D1b-22	D1b-Hou-22
67 Heck, Charlie	OL	6-8	311	3	North Carolina	D4a-20	D4a-Hou-20
71 Howard, Tytus	OL	6-5	322	4	Alabama State	D1-19	D1-Hou-19
74 Little, Greg	OL	6-5	322	4	Ole Miss	FA-Mia-23	D2-Car-19
69 Mason, Shaq	OL	6-1	310	8	Georgia Tech	T-TB-23	D4c-NE-15
79 Morrissey, Jimmy	OL	6-3	303	2	Pittsburgh	FA-21	D7-LV-21
54 Quessenberry, Scott	OL	6-3	310	5	UCLA	FA-LAC-22	D5-LAC-18
78 Tunsil, Laremy	OL	6-5	313	7	Ole Miss	T-Mia-19	D1-Mia-16
DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
56 Booker IV, Thomas	DL	6-3	301	1	Stanford	D5a-22	D5a-Hou-22
96 Collins, Maliek	DL	6-2	310	7	Nebraska	FA-LV-21	D3-Dal-16
52 Greenard, Jonathan	DL	6-3	263	3	Florida	D3-20	D3-Hou-20
94 Harris, Demone	DL	6-4	272	3	Buffalo	FA-21	FA-TB-18
93 Hinish, Kurt	DL	6-2	300	1	Notre Dame	FA-22	FA-Hou-22
55 Hughes, Jerry	DL	6-2	254	13	TCU	FA-22	D1-Ind-10
91 Lopez, Roy	DL	6-2	318	2	Arizona	D6-21	D6-Hou-21
75 Odeleye, Adedayo	DL	6-5	271	1	Loughborough	FA-22	FA-Hou-22
98 Rankins, Sheldon	DL	6-2	305	7	Louisville	FA-NYJ-23	D1-NO-16
97 Ridgeway, Hassan	DL	6-3	305	7	Texas	FA-SF-23	D4-Ind-16
95 Rivers, Derek	DL	6-5	250	6	Youngstown State	FA-LAR-21	D3a-NE-17
90 Stallworth, Taylor	DL	6-2	300	4	South Carolina	W-KC-22	FA-NO-18
50 Winovich, Chase	DL	6-3	251	4	Michigan	FA-Cle-23	D3a-NE-19
LINEBACKERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
49 Carter Jr., Jermaine	LB	6-0	265	5	Maryland	FA-Cle-23	D5-Car-18
35 Hansen, Jake	LB	6-1	235	1	Illinois	FA-22	FA-Hou-22
48 Harris, Christian	LB	6-1	226	1	Alabama	D3-22	D3-Hou-22
57 Hewitt, Neville	LB	6-2	234	8	Marshall	FA-21	FA-Mia-15
58 Kirksey, Christian	LB	6-2	235	9	Iowa	FA-GB-21	D3a-Cle-14
42 Littleton, Cory	LB	6-3	225	7	Washington	FA-Car-23	FA-LAR-16
6 Perryman, Denzel	LB	5-11	240	7	Miami (Fla.)	FA-LV-23	D2-LAC-15
32 Wallow, Garret	LB	6-2	230	2	TCU	D5b-21	D5b-Hou-21
DEFENSIVE BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
35 Arnold, Grayland	DB	5-10	187	3	Baylor	FA-21	FA-Phi-20
38 Francis, Cobi	DB	5-11	193	1	Memphis	FA-22	FA-Hou-22
43 Gillespie, Tyree	DB	6-0	210	2	Missouri	W-Jac-23	D4-LV-21
30 Hollman, Ka'dar	DB	6-0	196	3	Toledo	FA-23	D6-GB-19
0 King II, Desmond	DB	5-10	200	6	Iowa	FA-Ten-21	D5-LAC-17
23 Murray, Eric	DB	5-11	199	7	Minnesota	FA-Cle-20	D4b-KC-16
21 Nelson, Steven	DB	5-11	194	8	Oregon State	FA-Phi-22	D3b-KC-15
5 Pitre, Jalen	DB	5-11	198	1	Baylor	D2a-22	D2a-Hou-22
44 Phillips, Darius	DB	5-10	190	5	Western Michigan	FA-Den-23	D5-Cin-18
37 Ross, D'Angelo	DB	5-9	190	1	New Mexico	FA-22	FA-NE-19
20 Sheffield, Kendall	DB	5-10	212	4	Ohio State	FA-23	D4-Atl-19
29 Stewart, M.J.	DB	5-11	200	5	North Carolina	FA-Cle-22	D2b-TB-18
24 Stingley Jr., Derek	DB	6-0	190	1	LSU	D1a-22	D1a-Hou-22
4 Thomas, Tavierre	DB	5-10	205	5	Ferris State	FA-Cle-21	FA-Ari-18
1 Ward, Jimmie	DB	5-11	195	9	Northern Illinois	FA-SF-23	D1-SF-14
SPECIALISTS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
7 Fairbairn, Ka'imi	K	6-0	183	7	UCLA	FA-16	FA-Hou-16
11 Johnston, Cameron	P	5-11	194	5	Ohio State	FA-Phi-21	FA-Phi-17
46 Weeks, Jon	LS	5-10	242	13	Baylor	FA-10	FA-Hou-10

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	2	Robert Woods	19	Xavier Hutchinson (R)
WR	12	Nico Collins	85	Noah Brown
WR	8	John Metchie III		Tank Dell (R)
LT	78	Laremy Tunsil	67	Charlie Heck
LG	59	Kenyon Green	68	Jarrett Patterson (R)
C	70	Juice Scruggs (R)	54	Scott Quessenberry
RG	69	Shaq Mason	63	Michael Deiter
RT	71	Tytus Howard	76	Austin Deculus
TE	83	Dalton Schultz	84	Teagan Quitoriano
QB	7	C.J. Stroud (R)	18	Case Keenum
RB	31	Dameon Pierce	26	Devin Singletary

DEFENSE

DE	51	Will Anderson Jr. (R)	92	Dylan Horton (R)
DT	96	Maliek Collins	56	Thomas Booker IV
DT	98	Sheldon Rankins	91	Roy Lopez
DE	55	Jerry Hughes	52	Jonathan Greenard
LB	48	Christian Harris	32	Garret Wallow
LB	6	Denzel Perryman	42	Cory Littleton
CB	24	Derek Stingley Jr.	0	Desmond King II
CB	21	Steven Nelson	44	Darius Phillips
NB	4	Tavierre Thomas	0	Desmond King II
S	1	Jimmie Ward	23	Eric Murray
S	5	Jalen Pitre	29	M.J. Stewart

SPECIALISTS

K	7	Ka'imi Fairbairn	KR	13 Tank Dell (R)
P	11	Cameron Johnston	PR	13 Tank Dell (R)

-45.95

Despite a strong performance from rookie running back Dameon Pierce, the Texans had the AFC's worst figure for expected points contributed from their rushing offense at -45.95, per Pro Football Reference.

TEXANS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: A

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	C.J. Stroud	QB	6-3	218	Ohio State
1.	Will Anderson Jr.	DE	6-4	243	Alabama
2.	Juice Scruggs	C	6-3	310	Penn State
3.	Tank Dell	WR	5-10	165	Houston
4.	Dylan Horton	DE	6-4	265	TCU
5.	Henry To'oTo'o	LB	6-2	228	Alabama
6.	Jarrett Patterson	C/G	6-4	304	Notre Dame
6.	Xavier Hutchinson	WR	6-2	207	Iowa State
7.	Brandon Hill	S	5-11	195	Pittsburgh

The Texans landed one of two clear elite quarterbacks and traded up for the top defensive player in the draft. The franchise secured its critical needs while doubling up on depth at wide receiver and along the offensive interior. This draft always will be defined by Nick Caserio's decision to draft C.J. Stroud and trade Houston's No. 12 and No. 33 picks plus first- and third-rounders in 2024 for the No. 3 pick to select Will Anderson Jr. (plus a No. 105 pick later traded to the Eagles). Caserio still wields at least one pick in every round of the 2024 draft except the sixth. Do the Texans have their franchise quarterback? That ultimately will determine the final grade of this draft class.

IND COLTS

AFC SOUTH FORECAST 4

2023 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 10	Jacksonville	1:00
Sept. 17	at Houston	1:00
Sept. 24	at Baltimore	1:00
Oct. 1	Los Angeles Rams	1:00
Oct. 8	Tennessee	1:00
Oct. 15	at Jacksonville	1:00
Oct. 22	Cleveland	1:00
Oct. 29	New Orleans	1:00
Nov. 5	at Carolina	4:05
Nov. 12	New England (London)	9:30
Nov. 19	BYE	
Nov. 26	Tampa Bay	1:00
Dec. 3	at Tennessee	1:00
Dec. 10	at Cincinnati	1:00
Dec. 17	Pittsburgh	TBD
Dec. 24	at Atlanta	1:00
Dec. 31	Las Vegas	1:00
Jan. 7	Houston	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

THE COACHES

Head Coach: Shane Steichen
Record With Team: 0-0
Career Record: 0-0
Offensive Coordinator: Jim Bob Cooter
Defensive Coordinator: Gus Bradley
Special Teams Coordinator: Brian Mason
Quarterbacks: Cam Turner
Running Backs: DeAndre Smith
Wide Receivers: Reggie Wayne
Tight Ends: Tom Manning
Offensive Line: Tony Sparano Jr.
Defensive Line: Nate Ollie
Linebackers/Run Game Coordinator: Richard Smith
Defensive Backs: Ron Milus

After taking too many turns on the veteran quarterback carousel with six different Week 1 starters in as many years, the Indianapolis Colts hope they have a player they can build the franchise around: fourth overall pick Anthony Richardson. But as 2022 showed, the Colts have more holes than just the one at the most important position.

The Colts mistakenly thought they were a few players away from being a serious playoff contender before a 4-12-1 implosion. Everything that could go wrong did, starting with injuries that limited the offensive and defensive leaders, running back Jonathan Taylor and linebacker Shaquille Leonard. Veteran quarterback Matt Ryan was a bust — he fizzled quickly following his offseason trade from Atlanta — and head coach Frank Reich was fired after a 3-5-1 start.

General manager Chris Ballard begins his seventh season knowing that owner Jim Irsay has grown impatient. The Colts have one playoff win during Ballard's tenure and haven't won an AFC South Division title since 2014. New head coach Shane Steichen finished last season with a Super Bowl loss as Philadelphia's offensive coordinator. The 37-year-old coach might have more time than Ballard to sort through what's left to make the Colts at least respectable again.

OFFENSE

The offseason signing of veteran quarterback Gardner Minshew II suggests the Colts want to be prepared should Richardson not be NFL-ready. And that's sensible, considering the young passer — he just turned 21 in May — started only 13 games at Florida and didn't put up gaudy stats. But Richardson impressed the Colts as a 6-foot-4, 232-pound physical specimen with tremendous speed and a strong throwing arm, although his accuracy must improve. Young players need time to develop, but nothing speeds the learning curve like playing time. Steichen has to weigh winning on a weekly basis versus getting Richardson the playing time needed to show if he is a franchise quarterback. Like his predecessor Reich, Steichen intends to call the plays. Expect him to look for ways to utilize Richardson's athleticism the same way Steichen did for the Eagles' Jalen Hurts.

Perhaps more important than who plays quarterback is the return of a healthy Taylor, who missed six games last season with a right ankle injury that required an offseason procedure. The 2021 NFL rushing champion with 1,811 yards and 18 TDs must be a cornerstone. But defenses can load up the box to stop Taylor if the Colts are unable to move the chains by throwing. Another key is an offensive line that was the highest-paid group in the league but underachieved. There's little excuse for allowing 60 sacks, the second-highest total in the NFL. Pro Bowl center Ryan Kelly got pushed around too often. Perennial All-Pro guard Quenton Nelson also struggled at times. The same guys are back up front; they just need to play better. Ryan was released after becoming shell-shocked in 12 starts as he lost five of 15 fumbles, threw 13 interceptions and took 38 sacks.

The Colts need more reliable targets in the passing game other than No. 1 Michael Pittman Jr., The third-year pro had a career-best 99 receptions in 2022, but defenses keyed on him in crucial situations. That's why the Colts added speedy receiver Isaiah McKenzie in free agency and drafted another speedster in North Carolina's Josh Downs in the third round. Tight end Jelani Woods showed flashes of big-play potential as a rookie but needs to be a more consistent playmaker.

DEFENSE

Not having Leonard, one of the league's best linebackers, was crippling as the season unraveled with a 1-7 finish under interim head coach Jeff Saturday. "The Maniac" made only one start due to a lingering nerve issue in his back that has required two procedures since last summer. Leonard insists he's healthy and will be back to his Pro Bowl self. That would be a tremendous lift, considering he had 538 tackles, 15 sacks, 11 interceptions and 17 forced fumbles in his first four years.

CHRISTOPHER HANEWINCKEL-USA TODAY SPORTS

Veteran coordinator Gus Bradley is one of the holdovers because his defense was decent early on before relenting because of an offense that couldn't stay on the field. Indianapolis ranked 28th in points allowed (25.1), and its missteps were historic. The biggest letdown was in Week 15, when the Colts blew a 33-0 lead at Minnesota, allowing the Vikings to rally for a 39-36 overtime win. It was the biggest comeback in NFL history. But this defense now must regroup without its top cover corner, Stephon Gilmore, who was sent to Dallas after requesting a trade, as well as top pass rusher Yannick Ngakoue, who wasn't re-signed despite a team-high 9.5 sacks. An overworked pass rush that still generated 40 sacks needs the continual improvement of edge rusher Kwity Paye, who has 10 sacks in two years and is proving to be a difficult one-on-one assignment. The Colts also added Samson Ebukam in free agency after he put up a combined 9.5 sacks as a reserve with the 49ers the past two years.

A secondary that's missing Gilmore will be tested. The Colts hope second-round cornerback JuJu Brents can play right away. Cornerback Kenny Moore II, among the league's best slot corners, is entering a contract year after missing five games with an ankle injury. He wasn't shy about saying he deserved a more lucrative contract before getting hurt. Now he must earn it. Safety Rodney Thomas II was a pleasant surprise, as the seventh-round pick earned a starting job over third-round pick Nick Cross and had 52 tackles with four interceptions.

SPECIALISTS

Kicker Matt Gay signed a four-year, $22.5 million contract, the largest free-agent deal for a kicker in NFL history. Gay, who won a Super Bowl ring with the Rams, brings a strong leg to Indy; he made 7-of-9 kicks from 50-plus yards last season. Punter Rigoberto Sanchez was solid for five seasons until missing last year with an Achilles injury suffered in preseason. Long snapper Luke Rhodes, like Gay a 2021 Pro Bowl selection, also returns.

FINAL ANALYSIS

Steichen can't be blamed if he starts out with Minshew and gives Richardson time to develop. It seems unrealistic to expect a young, inexperienced passer to be able to make the pro adjustment so quickly. Like Richardson, Steichen has to believe that he has time to turn this team around and not make decisions for the wrong reasons. Minshew is 8-16 as a starter, but he knows the league and has the experience to keep the Colts in games early on. If the Colts season goes sideways quickly, then Richardson should see the field to speed up his learning curve. But forcing him into the fray when he's not ready could ruin his confidence and set him back.

Ballard has done some positive things in his tenure, most notably drafting Nelson and Leonard in the same year (2018) and selecting Taylor despite already having a leading rusher on the roster. Still, teams must win in the postseason, or changes will be made. Unless Richardson proves to be a miracle cure for what ails this team, expect the Colts to take painful baby steps in rebuilding. If so, don't expect Ballard to be around to see this reclamation project through.

2022 RESULTS (4-12-1)

Sept.	11	at Houston (ot)	T	20-20
Sept.	18	at Jacksonville	L	0-24
Sept.	25	Kansas City	W	20-17
Oct.	2	Tennessee	L	17-24
Oct.	6	at Denver (ot)	W	12-9
Oct.	16	Jacksonville	W	34-27
Oct.	23	at Tennessee	L	10-19
Oct.	30	Washington	L	16-17
Nov.	6	at New England	L	3-26
Nov.	13	at Las Vegas	W	25-20
Nov.	20	Philadelphia	L	16-17
Nov.	28	Pittsburgh	L	17-24
Dec.	4	at Dallas	L	19-54
Dec.	17	at Minnesota (ot)	L	36-39
Dec.	26	L.A. Chargers	L	3-20
Jan.	1	at N.Y. Giants	L	10-38
Jan.	8	Houston	L	31-32

2022 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	311.6	27	14
Rushing	109.8	23	10
Passing	201.9	23	12
Scoring	17.0	T30	T14
Third Down %	32.9	29	14
EPA/Play	-0.153	31	15
TO Differential	-13	32	16

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	334.0	15	9
Rushing	124.1	21	13
Passing	209.9	11	5
Scoring	25.1	T28	16
Interceptions	10	T24	14
Sacks	44	T10	5
EPA/Play	-0.018	13	7

2022 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Matt Ryan	461	309	3,057	14	13
Sam Ehlinger	101	64	573	3	3

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Jonathan Taylor	192	861	4.5	4
Zack Moss	76	365	4.8	1
Deon Jackson	68	236	3.5	1

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Michael Pittman Jr.	99	925	9.3	4
Parris Campbell	63	623	9.9	3
Alec Pierce	41	593	14.5	2
Kylen Granson	31	302	9.7	0
Deon Jackson	30	209	7.0	1

KICKING: Chase McLaughlin, 30-36 FGs, 21-21 PAT, 111 points
TACKLES: Zaire Franklin, 167; Bobby Okereke, 151
SACKS: Yannick Ngakoue, 9.5; DeForest Buckner, 8.0
INTERCEPTIONS: Rodney Thomas II, 4; Stephon Gilmore, 2; Rodney McLeod, 2

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

HIGH ON RICHARDSON Colts owner Jim Irsay phoned quarterback **Anthony Richardson** before the NFL draft began to say his team had targeted him for the fourth overall selection. How much did the Colts like Richardson? Irsay said that if the Colts had the No. 1 overall pick, "we would've probably taken Anthony."

NO MORE SATURDAY As much as Jeff Saturday was a fan favorite as a long-time Pro Bowl center in the Colts' glory years, including a Super Bowl XLI triumph, some fans couldn't have been more adamant about not retaining him as interim coach after he took over for the fired Frank Reich and went 1-7. A petition to stop Saturday's candidacy quickly amassed 3,000 signatures. "We as Colts fans will always love the memories of the SB XLI team; we love the former players and the people they've become, but we don't want Jeff Saturday as the head coach of this team going forward," the petition read. "Please hire someone with experience and save your fan base from revolting and losing interest."

HOOSIER CONNECTION Rookie tight end Will Mallory was thrilled to be drafted in the fifth round. Although he's never lived in the Hoosier state, his late grandfather, Bill, coached the Indiana Hoosiers from 1984-96, and his 69 wins are still a school record. Will's father, Mike, was a graduate assistant at IU in 1986-87. He's now an assistant special teams coach for the Denver Broncos. Will's uncle, Curt, has been Indiana State's head coach since 2017.

LET'S PLAY NINE The vetting of prospective quarterbacks included an unexpected twist for Kentucky's Will Levis when Colts head coach Shane Steichen suggested they go play nine holes of golf. No word on how the round went, but Levis ended up being drafted by Tennessee in the second round. Irsay said the Colts would have drafted Levis if Richardson had already been taken.

SCOUTING THE COLTS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP INDIANAPOLIS "Anthony Richardson is extremely raw, but his size-speed-arm strength combination is different from anyone to play in the NFL since a young Cam Newton. This had better work, or that's it for GM Chris Ballard. Richardson might not be ready for the first game or the first half of the season. If that's the case, the Colts can win a few games with Gardner Minshew II. Not predicting another episode of Minshew Mania, but he can hold his own in this weak division. … Not a bad receiving corps, but nothing spectacular. Michael Pittman Jr. is the closest thing the Colts have to a go-to guy. … Seriously disappointing performance by the offensive line last year. Even Quenton Nelson fell off, and he's usually a monster. … Ryan Kelly has not lived up to his contract. At all. … Jelani Woods has height, leaping ability and hands working in his favor. … Pharaoh Brown was a solid signing. … Jonathan Taylor's ankle is fine now. With the injury behind him, the offense has its featured back. What I question is whether they'll wear him out again with too heavy of a workload. …. DeForest Buckner's bull rush is one of the best in the NFL. … Signing Samson Ebukam should give the Colts a real pass rusher to go with Kwity Paye. … Shaquille Leonard's back injury ruined his season. They say you're never the same after back surgery. We're going to find out how true that is. … E.J. Speed lives up to his last name. … Rodney Thomas II has outplayed his draft status. … JuJu Brents fits the prototype as a long, fast corner. … Kenny Moore II has a real nose for the football. … Grant Stuard is a special-teams ace."

KIRBY LEE/USA TODAY SPORTS

2023 COLTS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS.	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
4 Ehlinger, Sam	QB	6-2	225	2	Texas	D6-21	D6-Ind-21
10 Minshew, Gardner	QB	6-1	225	4	Washington State	FA-Phi-23	D6-Jac-19

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
37 Funk, Jake	RB	5-10	205	2	Maryland	FA-22	D7-LAR-21
35 Jackson, Deon	RB	5-11	216	2	Duke	FA-21	FA-Ind-21
21 Moss, Zack	RB	5-9	205	3	Utah	T-Buf-22	D3-Buf-20
28 Taylor, Jonathan	RB	5-10	226	3	Wisconsin	D2-20	D2-Ind-20

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
81 Alie-Cox, Mo	TE	6-5	267	5	VCU	FA-17	FA-Ind-17
49 Brown, Pharaoh	TE	6-6	258	5	Oregon	FA-Cle-23	FA-LV-17
16 Dulin, Ashton	WR	6-2	215	4	Malone	FA-19	FA-Ind-19
84 Fernea, Ethan	WR	5-11	195	1	UCLA	FA-22	FA-Ind-22
83 Granson, Kylen	TE	6-3	242	2	SMU	D4-21	D4-Ind-21
6 McKenzie, Isaiah	WR	5-8	173	6	Georgia	FA-Buf-23	D5-Den-17
85 Ogletree, Drew	TE	6-5	260	1	Youngstown State	D6-22	D6-Ind-22
14 Pierce, Alec	WR	6-3	211	1	Cincinnati	D2-22	D2-Ind-22
11 Pittman Jr., Michael	WR	6-4	223	3	USC	D2-20	D2-Ind-20
86 Smith, Vyncint	WR	6-3	195	4	Limestone	FA-22	FA-Hou-18
17 Strachan, Mike	WR	6-5	225	2	Charleston	D7-21	D7-Ind-21
12 Turner, Malik	WR	6-2	202	5	Illinois	FA-23	FA-Sea-18
Winfree, Juwann	WR	6-1	210	3	Colorado	FA-23	D6-Den-19
80 Woods, Jelani	TE	6-7	253	1	Virginia	D3-22	D3-Ind-22

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
62 French, Wesley	C	6-4	307	1	Western Michigan	FA-22	FA-Ind-22
75 Fries, Will	C/G	6-6	305	2	Penn State	D7-21	D7-Ind-21
64 Hambright, Arlington	G	6-5	300	2	Colorado	FA-22	D7a-Chi-20
78 Kelly, Ryan	C	6-4	307	7	Alabama	D1-16	D1-Ind-16
71 Murray, Jordan	T	6-9	325	1	North Texas	FA-22	FA-Ind-22
56 Nelson, Quenton	G	6-5	330	5	Notre Dame	D1-18	D1-Ind-18
61 O'Donnell, Carter	G/T	6-5	305	1	Alberta	FA-20	FA-Ind-20
63 Pinter, Danny	G	6-4	301	3	Ball State	D5-20	D5-Ind-20
79 Raimann, Bernhard	T	6-6	303	1	Central Michigan	D3-22	D3-Ind-22
72 Smith, Braden	T	6-6	312	5	Auburn	D2-18	D2-Ind-18

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
97 Agim, McTelvin	DT	6-3	300	3	Arkansas	FA-22	D3-Den-20
96 Bryan, Taven	DT	6-5	291	5	Florida	FA-Cle-23	D1-Jac-18
99 Buckner, DeForest	DT	6-7	295	7	Oregon	T-SF-20	D1a-SF-16
52 Ebukam, Samson	DE	6-3	245	6	East. Washington	FA-SF-23	D4b-LAR-17
93 Johnson II, Eric	DT	6-4	299	1	Missouri State	D5-22	D5-Ind-22
55 Kareem, Khalid	DE	6-4	268	3	Notre Dame	FA-22	D5-Cin-20
94 Lewis, Tyquan	DE	6-3	267	5	Ohio State	D2-18	D2-Ind-18
54 Odeyingbo, Dayo	DE	6-6	286	2	Vanderbilt	D2-21	D2-Ind-21
51 Paye, Kwity	DE	6-3	265	2	Michigan	D1-21	D1-Ind-21
90 Stewart, Grover	DT	6-4	314	6	Albany State	D4-17	D4-Ind-17

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
57 Domann, JoJo	LB	6-1	230	1	Nebraska	FA-22	FA-Ind-22
44 Franklin, Zaire	LB	6-0	235	5	Syracuse	D7-18	D7-Ind-18
53 Leonard, Shaquille	LB	6-2	230	5	South Carolina St.	D2-18	D2-Ind-18
59 McGrone, Cameron	LB	6-1	236	2	Michigan	FA-22	D5-NE-21
50 Olubi, Segun	LB	6-2	220	1	San Diego State	FA-22	FA-SF-22
45 Speed, E.J.	LB	6-4	227	4	Tarleton State	D5-19	D5-Ind-19
41 Stuard, Grant	LB	5-11	230	2	Houston	T-TB-22	D7b-TB-21

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
39 Baker Jr., Darrell	CB	6-1	190	1	Georgia Southern	FA-22	FA-Ari-22
36 Black, Henry	S	6-0	204	3	Baylor	FA-22	FA-GB-20
32 Blackmon, Julian	S	6-0	202	3	Utah	D3-20	D3-Ind-20
38 Brown, Tony	CB	6-0	199	4	Alabama	FA-22	FA-LAC-18
20 Cross, Nick	S	6-0	212	1	Maryland	D3-22	D3-Ind-22
42 Dabo, Marcel	S	6-0	208	1	Stuttgart	FA-22	FA-Ind-22
43 Denbow, Trevor	S	5-10	208	1	SMU	FA-22	FA-Ind-22
33 Flowers, Dallis	CB	6-1	196	1	Pittsburg State	FA-22	FA-Ind-22
23 Moore II, Kenny	CB	5-9	190	6	Valdosta State	W-NE-17	FA-NE-17
34 Rodgers Sr., Isaiah	CB	5-10	176	3	UMass	D6-20	D6-Ind-20
25 Thomas II, Rodney	S	6-1	196	1	Yale	D7-22	D7-Ind-22
27 Tolliver II, Kevin	CB	6-2	192	3	LSU	FA-23	FA-Chi-18

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
7 Gay, Matt	K	6-0	232	4	Utah	FA-LAR-23	D5-TB-19
3 Havrisik, Lucas	K	6-2	188	1	Arizona	FA-23	FA-Ind-22
46 Rhodes, Luke	LS	6-2	238	6	William & Mary	FA-16	FA-TB-16
8 Sanchez, Rigoberto	P	6-0	195	6	Hawai'i	FA-17	FA-Ind-17

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	14	Alec Pierce	17	Mike Strachan
WR	11	Michael Pittman Jr.	16	Ashton Dulin
WR	6	Isaiah McKenzie	1	Josh Downs (R)
LT	79	Bernhard Raimann	73	Blake Freeland (R)
LG	56	Quenton Nelson	64	Arlington Hambright
C	78	Ryan Kelly	62	Wesley French
RG	75	Will Fries	63	Danny Pinter
RT	72	Braden Smith	71	Jordan Murray
TE	80	Jelani Woods	81	Mo Alie-Cox
QB	10	Gardner Minshew II	5	Anthony Richardson (R)
RB	28	Jonathan Taylor	21	Zack Moss

DEFENSE

DE	51	Kwity Paye	94	Tyquan Lewis
NT	90	Grover Stewart	96	Taven Bryan
DT	99	DeForest Buckner	95	Adetomiwa Adebawore (R)
DE	52	Samson Ebukam	54	Dayo Odeyingbo
SLB	45	E.J. Speed	57	JoJo Domann
MLB	44	Zaire Franklin	59	Cameron McGrone
WLB	53	Shaquille Leonard	41	Grant Stuard
CB	29	JuJu Brents (R)	34	Isaiah Rodgers Sr.
CB	23	Kenny Moore II	33	Dallis Flowers
SS	32	Julian Blackmon	20	Nick Cross
FS	25	Rodney Thomas II	31	Daniel Scott (R)

SPECIALISTS

K	7	Matt Gay	KR 33	Dallis Flowers
P	8	Rigoberto Sanchez	PR 6	Isaiah McKenzie

37

The Colts led the league with 37 fumbles, 11 more than any other AFC team.

COLTS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: A

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Anthony Richardson	QB	6-4	232	Florida
2.	JuJu Brents	CB	6-3	202	Kansas State
3.	Josh Downs	WR	5-10	175	North Carolina
4.	Blake Freeland	OT	6-7	312	BYU
4.	Adetomiwa Adebawore	DT	6-2	282	Northwestern
5.	Darius Rush	CB	6-2	198	South Carolina
5.	Daniel Scott	S	6-1	208	California
5.	Will Mallory	TE	6-4	239	Miami (Fla.)
5.	Evan Hull	RB	5-10	214	Northwestern
6.	Titus Leo	DE	6-3	243	Wagner
7.	Jaylon Jones	CB	6-2	205	Texas A&M
7.	Jake Witt	OT	6-7	302	N. Michigan

Trades past and present provided GM Chris Ballard with 12 picks, the most in franchise history since the draft went to seven rounds in 1994. Anthony Richardson wowed the Colts with his athleticism and arm strength in workouts, though he's still raw. Trading CB Stephon Gilmore meant needing to restock the secondary. Ballard obviously likes big corners, taking JuJu Brents, Darius Rush and Jaylon Jones. The hope is that one of them, presumably Brents, makes an immediate impact. A thin pass-catching room meant adding Josh Downs, who has tremendous speed and could be an ideal slot option. Will Mallory brings 4.5 speed and a knack for big plays. Evan Hull is adept at catching passes out of the backfield, which is a need after the Colts dealt third-down specialist Nyheim Hines last season.

JAGUARS

AFC SOUTH FORECAST

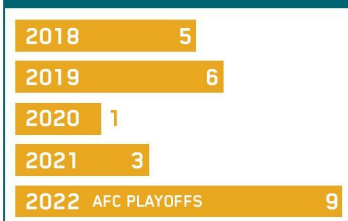
1

2023 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 10	at Indianapolis	1:00
Sept. 17	Kansas City	1:00
Sept. 24	Houston	1:00
Oct. 1	Atlanta (London)	9:30
Oct. 8	Buffalo (London)	9:30
Oct. 15	Indianapolis	1:00
Oct. 19	at New Orleans	8:15
Oct. 29	at Pittsburgh	1:00
Nov. 5	BYE	
Nov. 12	San Francisco	1:00
Nov. 19	Tennessee	1:00
Nov. 26	at Houston	1:00
Dec. 4	Cincinnati	8:15
Dec. 10	at Cleveland	1:00
Dec. 17	Baltimore	8:20
Dec. 24	at Tampa Bay	4:05
Dec. 31	Carolina	1:00
Jan. 7	at Tennessee	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND



THE COACHES

Head Coach: Doug Pederson
Record With Team: 9-8
Career Record: 51-45-1
Offensive Coordinator: Press Taylor
Defensive Coordinator: Mike Caldwell
Special Teams Coordinator: Heath Farwell
Passing Game Coordinator: Nick Holz
Quarterbacks: Mike McCoy
Running Backs: Bernie Parmalee
Wide Receivers: Chad Hall
Tight Ends: Richard Angulo
Offensive Line: Phil Rauscher
Defensive Line: Brentson Buckner
Inside Linebackers: Tony Gilbert
Outside Linebackers: Bill Shuey
Safeties: Cody Grimm
Passing Game Coordinator/Cornerbacks: Deshea Townsend

Times have changed in Jacksonville — fast and in a big way. Now, expectations have changed, too.

The Jaguars, who in 2022 won their first AFC South championship in five seasons after back-to-back seasons with the league's worst record, seem poised to take yet another jump in 2023. The reasons are many: a developing, young franchise quarterback; a mix of talent, experience and production at skill positions; a championship-winning head coach; a defense that specializes in takeaways and big plays; the moxie the Jags showed in erasing a 27-0 halftime deficit and storming back to beat the Chargers in the playoffs.

Quarterback Trevor Lawrence and head coach Doug Pederson aren't the only causes for the highest level of optimism around the Jaguars in at least a decade. There indeed are many factors in the team's anticipated improvement on a 9-8 season that nearly matched its victory total from the previous three seasons combined (10). But it starts with Lawrence and Pederson, who give the team its most capable quarterback/head coach combination in two decades.

OFFENSE

Lawrence, the No. 1 overall selection in the 2021 NFL Draft, began fulfilling that potential in 2022 — and his continued development is key to the Jaguars' short- and long-term future. He improved dramatically in Year 2, with 25 touchdown passes and eight interceptions after 12 touchdowns and 17 interceptions as a rookie — and Pederson believes Lawrence can take another step in the 2023 season, for a couple of reasons.

Lawrence is entering his second season in Pederson's system, and he showed dramatic improvement in the second half of last season as he became more acclimated. Lawrence also should have better rapport with a strong returning group of skill players, a group that will add wide receiver Calvin Ridley to a unit that ranked No. 10 in the NFL in points and yards per game last season.

Ridley, acquired in a trade last November with the Atlanta Falcons, was reinstated early this offseason after being suspended for the 2022 season for violating the NFL's gambling policy. If he returns to his 2020 form, when he emerged as a No. 1 receiver with Atlanta (1,374 yards, nine touchdowns), his precision route-running and big-play potential add an explosive element to the offense.

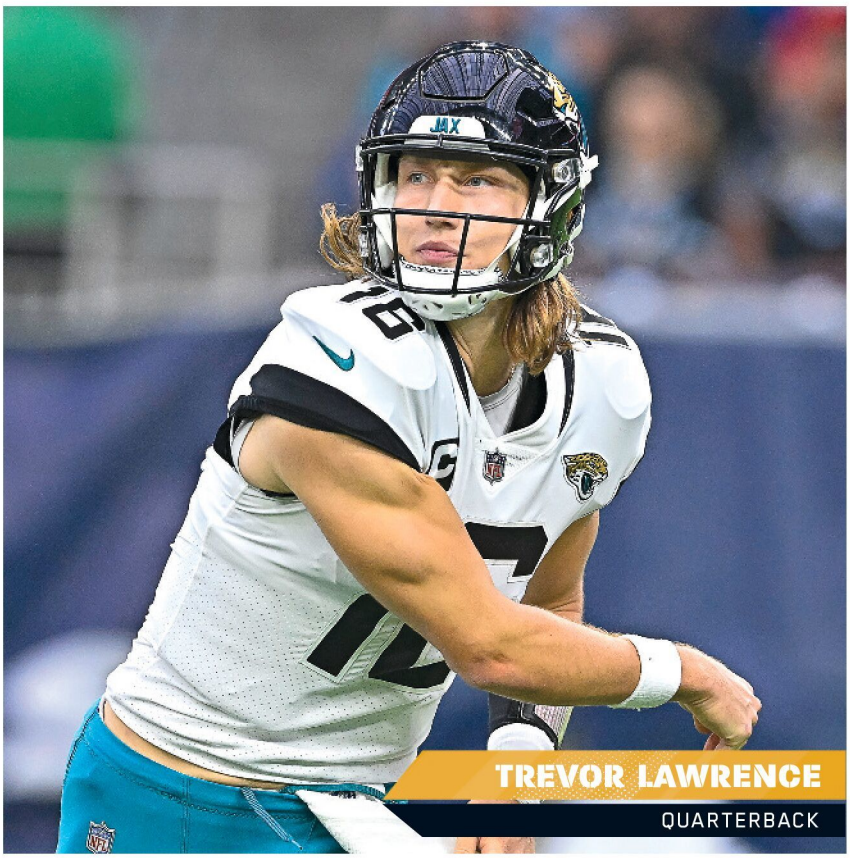
Ridley figures to complement a receiving corps of Christian Kirk, Zay Jones and tight end Evan Engram that is one of the NFL's fastest and most versatile. If Ridley indeed emerges as a WR1, Kirk — a 1,000-yard receiver in 2022 — could further flourish in the slot, and it also could open more options underneath for Engram.

Running back Travis Etienne Jr., who rushed for 1,125 yards and five touchdowns in 2022, has developed into one of the NFL's most-dangerous big-play backs. His explosive, tougher-than-expected style strains defenses — and he has the potential to be more productive as a receiver moving forward. Pederson believes Etienne and the Jaguars' running backs, like the entire offense, will benefit from a second season in the offensive system, while the addition of third-round rookie Tank Bigsby should give the Jaguars a short-yardage power runner the scheme lacked last season. Three 1,000-yard receivers and a 1,000-yard rusher are a rare combination; this Jaguars offense has the ability to produce them.

The most uncertain area offensively is the line, a talented group that underwent offseason change and that lost perhaps its best player from 2022 in right tackle Jawaan Taylor, who signed as an unrestricted free agent with the Kansas

City Chiefs. The unit also figures to enter 2023 without left tackle Cam Robinson, who reportedly will begin the season suspended for violating the NFL's performance-enhancing drug policy.

Anton Harrison, the No. 27 overall selection in the 2023 NFL Draft, figures to start the season at right tackle. Walker Little, who started late in the regular season and in the postseason when Robinson was out with a knee injury, likely will start at left tackle. How that group will look when Robinson returns is uncertain, with one of the three — perhaps Harrison — possibly moving to guard.



MARIA LYSAKER-USA TODAY SPORTS

DEFENSE

The defense has its own storyline entering 2023 — namely, can the team improve its pass rush and continue to be a turnover-forcing unit that complements the offense?

The key to that storyline figures to be two-fold: Can outside linebacker Josh Allen have a career year in his fifth-year option season, and can a trio of linebackers selected early in the 2022 NFL Draft emerge and make the front seven a disruptive unit?

Allen, the No. 7 overall selection in the 2019 NFL Draft, led the Jaguars with seven sacks in 2022 and is a better — and more consistent — pass rusher than his sack numbers indicate. He is key to the defense, but the Jaguars need more drive-ending plays from him.

It's imperative for last year's draft class to complement Allen up front. Outside linebacker Travon Walker, the No. 1 overall selection in '22, is a stout player opposite Allen who must improve as a pass rusher; he had only 3.5 sacks as a rookie. Inside linebacker Devin Lloyd, the No. 27 overall selection in '22, has elite turnover-producing skills but must remedy the lack of awareness that prompted the Jaguars to start Chad Muma — a third-round selection in '22 — in his place twice late in the 2022 season.

Also key for this defense: Continuing the improvement shown last season against the run, an area keyed by inside linebacker Foyesade Oluokun — a consistent leader who led the NFL in tackles for a second consecutive season (184 in 2022) after signing as an unrestricted free agent from Atlanta last offseason.

More concerning than the front seven is the secondary. Tyson Campbell emerged as a front-line corner in 2022 and figures to be CB1. But Darious Williams struggled at nickel corner in 2022 before moving outside and went without an interception for the season. Safeties Andre Cisco and Rayshawn Jenkins are capable of creating big plays.

The Jaguars' defense in 2023 must continue to be a turnover-centric unit and particularly needs an increased pass rush from a unit that improved late in the season but struggled often to get pressure in big situations.

SPECIALISTS

This is a strong area. Logan Cooke continues to be one of the NFL's premier punters (49.3 yards per punt average), with kicker Riley Patterson beginning to show he is a reliable kicker. Kickoff and punt returner Jamal Agnew is elite, and his game-changing speed is always a threat.

FINAL ANALYSIS

The Jaguars should contend in 2023, and they are worthy of their role as AFC South favorites. The offense figures to be among the NFL's best with a very real chance to be one of the top five units in the league. Ridley's addition, along with the arrivals of rookie tight end Brenton Strange and Bigsby, gives the offense significantly more balance and versatility and should allow Pederson to call his entire offense in a similar fashion to when he was in Philadelphia from 2016-20. This team can outscore opponents but also rely on its defense to close games and create takeaways in crucial situations. That should be enough to contend for a second consecutive postseason appearance — and possibly a deeper push in the playoffs than their divisional appearance in 2022.

2022 RESULTS (9-8)

Sept. 11	at Washington	L	22-28
Sept. 18	Indianapolis	W	24-0
Sept. 25	at L.A. Chargers	W	38-10
Oct. 2	at Philadelphia	L	21-29
Oct. 9	Houston	L	6-13
Oct. 16	at Indianapolis	L	27-34
Oct. 23	N.Y. Giants	L	17-23
Oct. 30	Denver	L	17-21
Nov. 6	at Las Vegas	W	27-20
Nov. 13	at Kansas City	L	17-27
Nov. 27	Baltimore	W	28-27
Dec. 4	at Detroit	L	14-40
Dec. 11	at Tennessee	W	36-22
Dec. 18	Dallas (ot)	W	40-34
Dec. 22	at N.Y. Jets	W	19-3
Jan. 1	at Houston	W	31-3
Jan. 7	Tennessee	W	20-16
Postseason			
Jan. 14	LA Chargers	W	31-30
Jan. 21	at Kansas City	L	20-27

2022 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	357.4	10	6
Rushing	124.5	14	5
Passing	232.9	10	6
Scoring	23.8	10	4
Third Down %	41.9	9	6
EPA/Play	0.045	8	5
TO Differential	+5	T7	T3

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	353.3	24	14
Rushing	114.8	12	10
Passing	238.5	28	14
Scoring	20.6	12	7
Interceptions	14	T12	T6
Sacks	35	T25	13
EPA/Play	-0.020	12	6

2022 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Trevor Lawrence	584	387	4,113	25	8
C.J. Beathard	11	7	35	0	1

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Travis Etienne Jr.	220	1,125	5.1	5
James Robinson	81	340	4.2	3
Trevor Lawrence	62	291	4.7	5

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Christian Kirk	84	1,108	13.2	8
Zay Jones	82	823	10.0	5
Evan Engram	73	766	10.5	4
Marvin Jones Jr.	46	529	11.5	3
Travis Etienne Jr.	35	316	9.0	0

KICKING: Riley Patterson, 30-35 FGs, 36-37 PAT, 126 points
TACKLES: Foyesade Oluokun, 184; Rayshawn Jenkins, 116
SACKS: Josh Allen, 7.0; Dawuane Smoot, 5.0
INTERCEPTIONS: Four tied with 3

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

FAST COMPANY Wide receiver **Christian Kirk** is a reason the Jaguars have one of the NFL's fastest offenses. Had he not played in the NFL, his life might be even faster. "I would have been a Formula One driver," he says. Kirk says he comes from a car family, one that has a garage in Willcox, Ariz. "We're a Porsche family," he says. "I'll whip around in a 914 or GT4 and get going." Asked if that might be a post-career interest, Kirk smiles: "I'm definitely going to be on the track somewhere. I'm an adrenaline junkie. That's why I play football, too."

INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT Jaguars second-year center Luke Fortner turned in a strong rookie season in 2021 and appears to be the team's long-term starter at the spot. He was lauded throughout the season for being a smart player, which isn't surprising. Fortner, who played collegiately at Kentucky, earned an undergraduate degree in mechanical engineering and a master's degree in aerospace engineering, and he is working toward a second master's in business administration. "Kind of the silver lining of the pandemic for me was I could come back and improve my draft stock, but also end up with an MBA," he says.

EXPERIENCE NECESSARY While it's ideal to build through the draft, the Jaguars are proof that free agency can work. Four of the Jaguars' projected top five receivers — Kirk, Zay Jones, Evan Engram (tight end) and Jamal Agnew — were acquired as unrestricted free agents in the 2021 and 2022 offseasons. The other player in the group of five — wide receiver Calvin Ridley — was acquired in a November 2022 trade.

BEEN THERE, DONE THAT Pederson, a backup quarterback in the NFL for 14 seasons, believes strongly in having NFL experience on a coaching staff. Twelve members of the Jaguars' coaching staff — including Pederson, defensive coordinator Mike Caldwell and special teams coordinator Heath Farwell — played in the NFL.

SCOUTING THE JAGUARS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP JACKSONVILLE "Trevor Lawrence put it all together in his second season. Have to give Doug Pederson a ton of credit for helping to develop him and finding the right players to make this offense go. Lawrence is a classic pocket passer, and he has the work ethic to lead the franchise. … Christian Kirk, as it turned out, wasn't overpaid. He was worth the big money they spent on him as a free agent. … Cam Robinson's performance-enhancing drug policy suspension would be a major problem if not for the Jaguars drafting Anton Harrison. He should be a good replacement. … Travis Etienne Jr. is one of the top all-purpose backs in the league. … Calvin Ridley could be the Comeback Player of the Year after the gambling suspension. … Evan Engram is a matchup problem. … Derek Parish, the fullback they drafted late, is a converted edge rusher. I see him playing both positions in the NFL and on special teams. … DaVon Hamilton is really valuable to this defense. He earned that extension. … I thought Devin Lloyd looked lost out there as a rookie. … K'Lavon Chaisson hasn't lived up to his draft status. … Travon Walker has much better traits than Aidan Hutchinson, but Hutchinson is a much better football player. … Tyson Campbell and Darious Williams aren't a flashy corner tandem, but they get the job done most of the time. … Andre Cisco is rangy and smart. … Foyesade Oluokun has a knack for navigating traffic and finding the football and was one of their better free-agent signings last year."

JAY BIGGERSTAFF/USA TODAY SPORTS

2023 JAGUARS VETERAN ROSTER

	QUARTERBACKS	POS.	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
3	Beathard, C.J.	QB	6-2	215	6	Iowa	FA-SF-21	D3b-SF-17
16	Lawrence, Trevor	QB	6-6	220	2	Clemson	D1-21	D1-Jac-21
18	Rourke, Nathan	QB	6-2	208	1	Ohio	FA-23	FA-Jac-23
	RUNNING BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
24	Conner, Snoop	RB	5-10	222	1	Ole Miss	D5-22	D5-Jac-22
1	Etienne Jr., Travis	RB	5-10	215	2	Clemson	D1-21	D1-Jac-21
22	Hasty, JaMycal	RB	5-8	205	3	Baylor	W-SF-22	FA-SF-20
25	Johnson, D'Ernest	RB	5-10	208	4	USF	FA-Cle-23	FA-Cle-19
38	Ollison, Qadree	RB	6-0	232	4	Pittsburgh	FA-23	D5-Atl-19
	RECEIVERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
39	Agnew, Jamal	WR	5-10	190	6	San Diego	FA-Det-21	D5-Det-17
80	Austin Jr., Kevin	WR	6-2	200	1	Notre Dame	FA-22	FA-Jac-22
17	Engram, Evan	TE	6-3	240	6	Ole Miss	FA-NYG-22	D1-NYG-17
89	Farrell, Luke	TE	6-5	250	2	Ohio State	D5-21	D5-Jac-21
15	Jones, Tim	WR	6-1	200	1	Southern Miss	FA-21	FA-Jac-21
7	Jones, Zay	WR	6-2	200	6	East Carolina	FA-LV-22	D2-Buf-17
13	Kirk, Christian	WR	5-11	200	5	Texas A&M	FA-Ari-22	D2-Ari-18
83	Moore, Jaylon	WR	5-11	198	1	Tennessee-Martin	FA-22	FA-Bal-20
86	Prince, Gerrit	TE	6-5	241	1	UAB	FA-22	FA-Jac-22
14	Pryor, Kendric	WR	5-11	189	1	Wisconsin	W-Cin-22	FA-Cin-22
0	Ridley, Calvin	WR	6-1	190	4	Alabama	T-Atl-22	D1-Atl-18
81	Williams, Seth	WR	6-3	211	2	Auburn	FA-22	D6-Den-21
	OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
78	Bartch, Ben	OL	6-6	315	3	St. John's (Minn.)	D4-20	D4-Jac-20
64	Cronk, Coy	OL	6-4	318	1	Iowa	FA-21	FA-GB-21
79	Fortner, Luke	OL	6-4	307	1	Kentucky	D3-22	D3-Jac-22
73	Hance, Blake	OL	6-5	310	3	Northwestern	W-SF-22	FA-Buf-19
72	Little, Walker	OL	6-7	325	2	Stanford	D2-21	D2-Jac-21
61	Murray, Jimmy	OL	6-5	318	3	Holy Cross	FA-22	FA-KC-18
74	Robinson, Cam	OL	6-6	335	6	Alabama	D2-17	D2-Jac-17
68	Scherff, Brandon	OL	6-5	315	8	Iowa	FA-Was-22	D1-Was-15
69	Shatley, Tyler	OL	6-3	305	9	Clemson	FA-14	FA-Jac-14
70	Van Lanen, Cole	OL	6-5	312	2	Wisconsin	T-GB-22	D6a-GB-21
77	Wells, Josh	OL	6-6	306	8	James Madison	FA-TB-23	FA-Jac-14
60	Williams, Darryl	OL	6-3	304	2	Mississippi State	FA-22	FA-KC-20
	DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
98	Dogbe, Michael	DL	6-3	280	4	Temple	FA-Ari-23	D7b-Ari-19
94	Fatukasi, Folorunso	DL	6-4	318	5	Connecticut	FA-NYJ-22	D6b-NYJ-18
96	Gotsis, Adam	DL	6-4	290	6	Georgia Tech	FA-21	D2-Den-16
52	Hamilton, DaVon	DT	6-4	335	3	Ohio State	D3-20	D3-Jac-20
99	Ledbetter, Jeremiah	DL	6-3	299	3	Arkansas	FA-21	D6-Det-17
90	Mondeaux, Henry	DL	6-4	280	3	Oregon	FA-NYG-23	FA-NO-18
95	Robertson-Harris, Roy	DL	6-5	290	7	UTEP	FA-Chi-21	FA-Chi-16
97	Thurman, Nick	DT	6-4	295	3	Houston	FA-22	FA-Hou-18
	LINEBACKERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
41	Allen, Josh	OLB	6-5	255	4	Kentucky	D1-19	D1-Jac-19
45	Chaisson, K'Lavon	OLB	6-3	245	3	LSU	D1-20	D1-Jac-20
47	Dixon, De'Shaan	OLB	6-4	247	1	Norfolk State	FA-22	FA-Jac-22
57	Johnson, Caleb	LB	6-2	220	2	Houston Baptist	W-Chi-22	FA-Chi-21
33	Lloyd, Devin	LB	6-3	235	1	Utah	D1-22	D1-Jac-22
48	Muma, Chad	LB	6-3	239	1	Wyoming	D3-22	D3-Jac-22
23	Oluokun, Foyesade	LB	6-2	230	5	Yale	FA-Atl-22	D6b-Atl-18
50	Quarterman, Shaquille	LB	6-0	240	3	Miami (Fla.)	D4-20	D4-Jac-20
92	Smith, Jordan	OLB	6-7	250	2	UAB	D4-21	D4-Jac-21
44	Walker, Travon	OLB	6-5	272	1	Georgia	D1-22	D1-Jac-22
	DEFENSIVE BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
30	Brown, Montaric	CB	6-0	190	1	Arkansas	D7-22	D7-Jac-22
29	Campbell, Tevaughn	CB	6-0	200	4	Regina	FA-22	FA-NYJ-19
32	Campbell, Tyson	CB	6-1	195	2	Georgia	D2-21	D2-Jac-21
5	Cisco, Andre	S	6-0	210	2	Syracuse	D3-21	D3-Jac-21
6	Claybrooks, Chris	CB	5-9	180	3	Memphis	D7-20	D7-Jac-20
37	Herndon, Tre	CB	5-11	190	5	Vanderbilt	FA-18	FA-Jac-18
2	Jenkins, Rayshawn	S	6-1	200	6	Miami (Fla.)	FA-LAC-21	D4-LAC-17
34	Junior, Gregory	CB	6-0	190	1	Ouachita Baptist	D6-22	D6-Jac-22
35	Oyelola, Ayo	S	5-11	213	1	Nottingham	FA-22	FA-Jac-22
20	Thomas, Daniel	S	5-10	215	3	Auburn	D5a-20	D5a-Jac-20
21	Thompson, Deionte	S	6-1	195	4	Alabama	FA-22	D5-Ari-19
31	Williams, Darious	CB	5-9	187	5	UAB	FA-LAR-22	FA-Bal-18
42	Wingard, Andrew	S	6-0	200	4	Wyoming	FA-19	FA-Jac-19
	SPECIALISTS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
9	Cooke, Logan	P	6-5	230	5	Mississippi State	D7b-18	D7b-Jac-18
46	Matiscik, Ross	LS	6-0	240	3	Baylor	FA-20	FA-Jac-20
10	Patterson, Riley	K	6-0	190	2	Memphis	W-Det-22	FA-Min-21

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	0	Calvin Ridley	39	Jamal Agnew
WR	7	Zay Jones	15	Tim Jones
WR	13	Christian Kirk	11	Parker Washington (R)
LT	72	Walker Little	77	Josh Wells
LG	78	Ben Bartch	73	Blake Hance
C	79	Luke Fortner	69	Tyler Shatley
RG	68	Brandon Scherff	70	Cole Van Lanen
RT	76	Anton Harrison (R)	77	Josh Wells
TE	17	Evan Engram	85	Brenton Strange (R)
QB	16	Trevor Lawrence	3	C.J. Beathard
RB	1	Travis Etienne Jr.	4	Tank Bigsby (R)

DEFENSE

DE	95	Roy Robertson-Harris	96	Adam Gotsis
NT	52	DaVon Hamilton	59	Raymond Vohasek (R)
DE	94	Folorunso Fatukasi	93	Tyler Lacy (R)
SLB	44	Travon Walker	45	K'Lavon Chaisson
LB	23	Foyesade Oluokun	48	Chad Muma
LB	33	Devin Lloyd	51	Ventrell Miller (R)
WLB	41	Josh Allen	56	Yasir Abdullah (R)
CB	32	Tyson Campbell	37	Tre Herndon
CB	31	Darious Williams	6	Chris Claybrooks
S	2	Rayshawn Jenkins	42	Andrew Wingard
S	5	Andre Cisco	26	Antonio Johnson (R)

SPECIALISTS

K	10	Riley Patterson	KR	39	Jamal Agnew
P	9	Logan Cooke	PR	39	Jamal Agnew

95

Jaguars defenders did an excellent job of getting their hands on throws, pacing the NFL with 95 passes defended.

JAGUARS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B-

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Anton Harrison	OT	6-4	315	Oklahoma
2.	Brenton Strange	TE	6-3	247	Penn State
3.	Tank Bigsby	RB	6-0	213	Auburn
4.	Ventrell Miller	LB	6-0	221	Florida
4.	Tyler Lacy	DE	6-4	285	Oklahoma State
5.	Yasir Abdullah	LB	6-1	234	Louisville
5.	Antonio Johnson	S	6-3	195	Texas A&M
6.	Parker Washington	WR	5-10	212	Penn State
6.	Christian Braswell	CB	5-10	181	Rutgers
6.	Erick Hallett II	S	5-11	190	Pittsburgh
7.	Cooper Hodges	OT	6-3	311	Appalachian St.
7.	Raymond Vohasek	DT	6-2	311	North Carolina
7.	Derek Parish	FB	6-1	241	Houston

Anton Harrison, the No. 27 overall selection, is an athletic and strong player who figures to start immediately on the right side of the offensive line. Brenton Strange should complement veteran Evan Engram when head coach Doug Pederson wants to feature two tight ends, and Tank Bigsby should enable Pederson to employ the backfield-by-committee approach he utilized effectively as the Philadelphia Eagles' head coach from 2016-20. Bigsby also could give the offense a power element it lacked in 2022.

TITANS

AFC SOUTH FORECAST 2

After missing the playoffs for the first time in four seasons, the Tennessee Titans will look to get back to their winning ways in 2023, hoping the return of key injured players, the signing of some high-upside free agents and a foundational first-round pick will help them do so.

The Titans appeared poised to record their seventh straight winning season following a 7-3 start. But Tennessee collapsed down the stretch, losing its final seven games and paving the way for change moving forward.

How will the Titans reverse their recent fortunes?

One key should be the return of starting quarterback Ryan Tannehill, who missed five games last season — including the final three — due to ankle injuries. On the other side of the ball, edge rusher Harold Landry III (31 sacks in his first four seasons) will be back after missing all of 2022 with a torn ACL.

The franchise's biggest challenge will be to pump life back into an offense that ranked among the league's worst (30th) last season — and in particular to find a passing game to complement the running of Derrick Henry.

Defensively, the Titans will need to make huge improvement against the pass after allowing an NFL-worst 274.8 yards per game through the air last season.

2023 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 10	at New Orleans	1:00
Sept. 17	L.A. Chargers	1:00
Sept. 24	at Cleveland	1:00
Oct. 1	Cincinnati	1:00
Oct. 8	at Indianapolis	1:00
Oct. 15	Baltimore (London)	9:30
Oct. 22	BYE	
Oct. 29	Atlanta	1:00
Nov. 2	at Pittsburgh	8:15
Nov. 12	at Tampa Bay	1:00
Nov. 19	at Jacksonville	1:00
Nov. 26	Carolina	1:00
Dec. 3	Indianapolis	1:00
Dec. 11	at Miami	8:15
Dec. 17	Houston	1:00
Dec. 24	Seattle	1:00
Dec. 31	at Houston	1:00
Jan. 7	Jacksonville	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

THE COACHES

Head Coach: Mike Vrabel
Record With Team: 48-34
Career Record: 48-34
Offensive Coordinator: Tim Kelly
Defensive Coordinator: Shane Bowen
Special Teams: Craig Aukerman
Pass Game Coordinator/Quarterbacks: Charles London
Run Game Coordinator/Running Backs: Justin Outten
Wide Receivers: Rob Moore
Tight Ends: Tony Dews
Offensive Line: Jason Houghtaling
Assistant Head Coach-Defense/Defensive Line: Terrell Williams
Inside Linebackers: Bobby King
Outside Linebackers: Ryan Crow
Defensive Pass Game Coordinator/CB: Chris Harris
Safeties: Scott Booker

OFFENSE

There are all kinds of questions to answer on this side of the ball after the Titans finished 28th in points scored (17.5 per game) and 30th in passing yardage (171.4) last season. Up front, Tennessee will need to replace three veteran starters — left tackle Taylor Lewan, center Ben Jones and right guard Nate Davis.

First-round pick Peter Skoronski likely will get the first shot at taking over the starting left tackle role, though he could wind up at guard. There's also free-agent addition Andre Dillard, who likely will start at either left tackle or guard after signing a three-year deal worth a surprising $29 million. A first-round pick of Philadelphia in 2019, Dillard appears to have potential, but he started only nine games in three seasons for the Eagles and played just 37 offensive snaps last year.

The Titans may move Aaron Brewer, last year's starting left guard, to center this season, which would better fit his athleticism and leverage. Veteran free-agent signee Daniel Brunskill, a versatile four-year veteran with 42 starts, appears to be the leading candidate to start at right guard. Nicholas Petit-Frere will look to make strides on his rookie season at right tackle.

The Titans need a significant step forward this season from wide receiver Treylon Burks, as the team's 2022 first-round pick was limited to 11 games, 33 catches (444 yards) and one touchdown last season due to injury and poor conditioning that severely limited his offseason program. It remains to be seen who else will produce at a thin wide receiver position that wasn't bolstered much in the draft. Nick Westbrook-Ikhine is steady but limited, while youngsters Kyle Philips and Racey McMath are unproven. Free-agent addition Chris Moore brings some experience and production, but not explosiveness.

Tight end Chigoziem Okonkwo flashed significant potential as a rookie last season, catching 32 passes for 450 yards and three touchdowns. Look for increased production from him.

Henry, 29, has been the Titans' workhorse centerpiece, averaging more than 300 carries for the past four seasons. It remains to be seen whether Henry's workload remains the same under new offensive coordinator Tim Kelly. Third-round draft pick Tyjae Spears looks like a nice complement to Henry.

GEORGE WALKER IV / TENNESSEAN.COM

Tannehill can only hope for better offensive line play and a better receiving cast in 2023, as the 34-year-old seeks to rebound from offseason ankle surgery. If Tannehill is slow to recover, second-round pick Will Levis is waiting in the wings.

DEFENSE

The Titans made sure the centerpiece of their defense, defensive tackle Jeffery Simmons, would be in Nashville for years to come when they signed the two-time Pro Bowler to a four-year, $94 million extension during the offseason.

He'll anchor a unit that finished first in the league against the run last year (76.9 yards per game) and will once again be bolstered by the likes of Teair Tart and Denico Autry. The Titans will need free-agent signing Azeez Al-Shaair to replace David Long Jr. at inside linebacker, as Long (Tennessee's second-leading tackler in 2022) was another key to stopping the run. Monty Rice, a third-round pick in 2021, must show he deserves a starting role alongside Al-Shaair.

The key will be improving a pass defense that was smoked for 29 TD passes last year, the second-highest figure in the league. Landry's return should be a huge boost in pressuring the passer, as he produced 12 sacks, 49 quarterback pressures and 14 tackles for a loss in 2021 before tearing his ACL last September. Arden Key, another former 49er signed by new GM Ran Carthon during the offseason, should serve as a complement to Landry off the edge. He's a younger, healthier version of Bud Dupree, cut by the Titans after two disappointing seasons.

The Titans desperately need improved health and production at the cornerback position. The team signed veteran Sean Murphy-Bunting, who should serve as one of the team's top three at the position despite missing a combined 13 games over the past two seasons in Tampa Bay. Roger McCreary had a solid rookie season as a starting cornerback.

But what about starter Kristian Fulton? He looked like he might have the makings of a shutdown corner at times in 2021. But he missed six games last year and has missed 20 in his first three seasons. The Titans also have plenty of concerns about 2021 first-round pick Caleb Farley. Inexperienced coming out of college, Farley has been limited by injury to just 12 games in two years, and he has for the most part looked overwhelmed. Elijah Molden, a third-round pick in 2021, was limited to two games last year with a hip injury.

SPECIALISTS

Punter Ryan Stonehouse should be a legitimate field-flipping threat for years to come after earning second-team All-Pro honors as a rookie. He finished first in the league with a 53.1-yard gross average last season, setting an NFL record in the process. The Titans want to see him improve his directional punting and hang time in 2023.

Caleb Shudak has a leg up on the kicking job, but his inexperience — he played in one game as a rookie, making 3-of-4 field-goal attempts — means he will have competition in training camp. The Titans have not ruled out re-signing Randy Bullock.

Philips will get another shot on punt returns despite a couple muffs last season, while second-year backs Julius Chestnut and Hassan Haskins are likely to battle for the kick returner job. Chestnut averaged 21.5 yards on 10 returns last year, using his power to break through hand tackles.

FINAL ANALYSIS

The Titans should be a better team than last year, based in part on precedent (head coach Mike Vrabel had guided Tennessee to four consecutive winning records before last year) and on the likelihood that they won't sustain a third straight season of staggering injuries. But just how much better remains to be seen for a team that is going through a transition, with Tannehill and Henry entering the final years of their contracts. The Titans did address a woeful offensive line in free agency and the draft, but there are still significant questions about the wide receiver room and passing attack.

Once again, the fortunes of the Titans are likely to rely on the production of Henry and the defense's ability to keep games close.

2022 RESULTS (7-10)

Sept. 11	N.Y. Giants	L	20-21
Sept. 19	at Buffalo	L	7-41
Sept. 25	Las Vegas	W	24-22
Oct. 2	at Indianapolis	W	24-17
Oct. 9	at Washington	W	21-17
Oct. 23	Indianapolis	W	19-10
Oct. 30	at Houston	W	17-10
Nov. 6	at Kansas City (ot)	L	17-20
Nov. 13	Denver	W	17-10
Nov. 17	at Green Bay	W	27-17
Nov. 27	Cincinnati	L	16-20
Dec. 4	at Philadelphia	L	10-35
Dec. 11	Jacksonville	L	22-36
Dec. 18	at L.A. Chargers	L	14-17
Dec. 24	Houston	L	14-19
Dec. 29	Dallas	L	13-27
Jan. 7	at Jacksonville	L	16-20

2022 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	296.8	30	15
Rushing	125.4	13	4
Passing	171.4	30	16
Scoring	17.5	28	12
Third Down %	36.5	23	10
EPA/Play	-0.066	T25	12
TO Differential	-3	T22	T11

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	351.6	23	13
Rushing	76.9	1	1
Passing	274.8	32	16
Scoring	21.1	T13	T8
Interceptions	14	T12	T6
Sacks	39	T18	T10
EPA/Play	0.015	T21	12

2022 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Ryan Tannehill	325	212	2,536	13	6
Joshua Dobbs	68	40	411	2	2
Malik Willis	61	31	276	0	3

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Derrick Henry	349	1,538	4.4	13
Dontrell Hilliard	22	145	6.6	0

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Robert Woods	53	527	9.9	2
Austin Hooper	41	444	10.8	2
Derrick Henry	33	398	12.1	0
Treylon Burks	33	444	13.5	1
Chigoziem Okonkwo	32	450	14.1	3

KICKING: Randy Bullock, 17-20 FGs, 28-28 PAT, 79 points
TACKLES: Kevin Byard, 108; David Long Jr., 86
SACKS: Denico Autry, 8.0; Jeffery Simmons, 7.5
INTERCEPTIONS: Kevin Byard, 4; David Long Jr., 2

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

BRIGHT FUTURE The Titans had one of the league's worst passing attacks last season, but **Chigoziem Okonkwo's** contributions paint a bright future for the 2022 fourth-round pick. He recorded 24 of his 32 catches over the final seven games last season, and — per Pro Football Focus — Okonkwo led all tight ends (with at least 30 catches) with a 7.8-yard average after the catch and a 2.61-yard average per route run.

FRANCHISE HISTORY New general manager Ran Carthon, who replaced Jon Robinson, is the first minority the organization has made a head coach or general manager since moving to Tennessee. "It's paramount in my mind to do the work and be successful and leave the door open for other Black men that come behind me because there are a lot of talented young Black men that can do the job. They just need the opportunity," Carthon says.

RUN THE DAMN BALL The Titans may tweak their heavy reliance on Derrick Henry's running this year, but don't expect a complete transformation. "It's cute and sexy to play Golden State Warriors football in September and October when the weather is good, but the teams that play in January play tough defense and run the football," Carthon says.

KEY CIRCLING JACKSONVILLE GAMES Arden Key had hoped to re-sign with Jacksonville after posting 4.5 sacks and 15 quarterback hits last season. The fact the Jaguars moved on from him left a mark: "I felt disrespected. … I still love the players, love the teammates, love the city, love the fans. But yeah, we gotta see them twice."

CAN THEY STAY HEALTHY? One of the Titans' major storylines heading into 2023 will be the team's ability to avoid last season's injury epidemic. Tennessee set an NFL record by using 91 players in 2021 and followed that by using 86 in 2022, when they led the NFL with 339 man-games lost to injury.

SCOUTING THE TITANS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP TENNESSEE "They're in a real transitional time at quarterback. Ryan Tannehill doesn't play like he has much left at all. He has lost arm strength, mobility and durability. … Will Levis is up next after Malik Willis proved last year he's not very good. Levis dropped to the second round because of his tape, not his quirky personality. Levis is prone to interceptions. His footwork is shaky. He needs to improve his fundamentals. … GM Ran Carthon is a good talent evaluator. He has plenty of time to fix this roster. He's got a long runway. … Treylon Burks was inconsistent as a rookie. He needed to report in better shape. That shouldn't be an issue this year. … Nick Westbrook-Ikhine flashed last season. … Peter Skoronski fits how Mike Vrabel wants to play. The arm length thing is a real factor as a tackle, but he's a natural fit at guard. … Chigoziem Okonkwo gives the Titans a vertical threat at tight end. … Derrick Henry isn't declining, that's for sure. … Jeffery Simmons was worth that big contract. Nobody can stop this guy. … Harold Landry III should be 100 percent again after the knee injury. … Azeez Al-Shaair dramatically improves their run defense. A lot of other teams wanted Al-Shaair during free agency, including the Texans with DeMeco Ryans, his former defensive coordinator with the 49ers. … Kevin Byard won't accept a pay cut. The impasse continues. … Roger McCreary was an instant hit as a rookie last year. … Teair Tart is a heavy-handed nose tackle. … The Titans need Caleb Farley to start paying some dividends on their investment."

ANDREW NELLES/USA TODAY SPORTS

2023 TITANS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS.	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
17 Tannehill, Ryan	QB	6-4	217	11	Texas A&M	T-Mia-19	D1-Mia-12
7 Willis, Malik	QB	6-1	219	1	Liberty	D3b-22	D3b-Ten-22

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
36 Chestnut, Julius	RB	5-11	228	1	Sacred Heart	FA-22	FA-Ten-22
25 Haskins, Hassan	RB	6-2	228	1	Michigan	D4a-22	D4a-Ten-22
22 Henry, Derrick	RB	6-3	247	7	Alabama	D2c-16	D2c-Ten-16
33 Ward, Jonathan	RB	6-0	202	3	Central Michigan	FA-22	FA-Ari-20

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
16 Burks, Treylon	WR	6-2	225	1	Arkansas	D1-22	D1-Ten-22
10 Fitzpatrick, Dez	WR	6-2	208	2	Louisville	D4a-21	D4a-Ten-21
12 Kinsey, Mason	WR	5-10	202	1	Berry College	FA-21	FA-Ten-20
13 McMath, Racey	WR	6-3	217	2	LSU	D6a-21	D6a-Ten-21
11 Moore, Chris	WR	6-1	200	7	Cincinnati	FA-Hou-23	D4b-Bal-16
49 Odukoya, Thomas	TE	6-6	253	1	Eastern Michigan	FA-22	FA-Ten-22
85 Okonkwo, Chigoziem	TE	6-3	238	1	Maryland	D4b-22	D4b-Ten-22
18 Philips, Kyle	WR	5-11	189	1	UCLA	D5-22	D5-Ten-22
86 Rader, Kevin	TE	6-4	250	2	Youngstown State	FA-22	FA-GB-18
83 Rigg, Justin	TE	6-6	259	1	Kentucky	FA-23	FA-Cin-22
80 Roberson Jr., Reggie	WR	5-11	193	1	SMU	FA-22	FA-Ten-22
88 Wesco, Trevon	TE	6-3	267	4	West Virginia	FA-Chi-23	D4-NYJ-19
15 Westbrook-Ikhine, Nick	WR	6-2	211	3	Indiana	FA-20	FA-Ten-20

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
55 Brewer, Aaron	G/C	6-1	295	3	Texas State	FA-20	FA-Ten-20
60 Brunskill, Daniel	OL	6-5	300	4	San Diego State	FA-SF-23	FA-Atl-17
71 Dillard, Andre	T	6-5	315	4	Washington State	FA-Phi-23	D1-Phi-19
68 Johnson, Zack	OL	6-6	301	1	North Dakota St.	FA-22	FA-GB-20
73 Jones, Jamarco	OL	6-4	293	5	Ohio State	FA-Sea-21	D5d-Sea-18
72 Leglue, John	OL	6-7	310	2	Tulane	FA-23	FA-Den-19
62 Levin, Corey	C/G	6-4	307	4	Chattanooga	FA-21	FA-Ten-17
52 Munyer, Daniel	C	6-1	305	5	Colorado	FA-19	FA-KC-15
67 Newman, Xavier	C/G	6-2	297	1	Baylor	FA-22	FA-Ten-22
78 Petit-Frere, Nicholas	OL	6-5	316	1	Ohio State	D3a-22	D3a-Ten-22
75 Radunz, Dillon	OL	6-6	301	2	North Dakota St.	D2-21	D2-Ten-21
70 Roos, Jordan	G	6-3	302	3	Purdue	FA-21	FA-Sea-17
76 Rupcich, Andrew	T	6-6	318	1	Culver-Stockton	FA-22	FA-Ten-22

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
96 Autry, Denico	DL	6-5	285	9	Mississippi State	FA-Ind-21	FA-LV-14
79 Brooks, Curtis	DT	6-2	287	1	Cincinnati	FA-23	FA-Ind-22
90 Jones, Naquan	DT	6-3	313	2	Michigan State	FA-21	FA-Ten-21
72 Peevy, Jayden	DE	6-5	308	1	Texas A&M	FA-22	FA-Ten-22
98 Simmons, Jeffery	DT	6-4	305	4	Mississippi State	D1-19	D1-Ten-19
93 Tart, Teair	DT	6-2	304	3	FIU	FA-20	FA-Ten-20

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
2 Al-Shaair, Azeez	LB	6-2	228	4	Florida Atlantic	FA-SF-23	FA-SF-19
45 Campbell, Chance	LB	6-2	232	1	Ole Miss	D6b-22	D6b-Ten-22
50 Gibbens, Jack	LB	6-3	242	1	Minnesota	FA-22	FA-Ten-22
57 Gifford, Luke	LB	6-3	242	4	Nebraska	FA-Dal-23	FA-Dal-19
49 Key, Arden	OLB	6-5	240	5	LSU	FA-Jac-23	D3b-LV-18
58 Landry III, Harold	OLB	6-2	252	5	Boston College	D2-18	D2-Ten-18
52 McCloud, Zach	LB	6-2	235	1	Miami (Fla.)	FA-22	FA-Min-22
47 Niemann, Ben	LB	6-2	235	5	Iowa	FA-Ari-23	FA-KC-18
59 Okuayinonu, Sam	LB	6-1	269	1	Maryland	FA-23	FA-Ten-22
56 Rice, Monty	LB	6-0	233	2	Georgia	D3a-21	D3a-Ten-21
99 Weaver, Rashad	OLB	6-4	259	2	Pittsburgh	D4b-21	D4b-Ten-21

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
30 Avery, Tre	CB	5-11	181	1	Rutgers	FA-22	FA-Ten-22
44 Brown, Mike	S	6-2	222	1	Miami (Ohio)	PS-Cle-22	FA-Min-22
31 Byard, Kevin	S	5-11	212	7	Middle Tennessee	D3-16	D3-Ten-16
38 Carter, Shyheim	S	6-0	194	1	Alabama	FA-23	FA-NYJ-20
3 Farley, Caleb	CB	6-2	197	2	Virginia Tech	D1-21	D1-Ten-21
26 Fulton, Kristian	CB	5-11	197	3	LSU	D2-20	D2-Ten-20
37 Hooker, Amani	S	5-11	210	4	Iowa	D4-19	D4-Ten-19
35 Jackson, Chris	DB	5-10	193	3	Marshall	D7b-20	D7b-Ten-20
32 Mabin, Greg	CB	6-2	200	6	Iowa	FA-22	FA-TB-17
21 McCreary, Roger	CB	5-11	190	1	Auburn	D2-22	D2-Ten-22
24 Molden, Elijah	CB	5-10	192	2	Washington	D3b-21	D3b-Ten-21
0 Murphy-Bunting, Sean	CB	6-0	195	4	Central Michigan	FA-TB-23	D2-TB-19
29 Thompson, Josh	DB	6-0	194	1	Texas	FA-22	FA-Jac-22

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
46 Cox, Morgan	LS	6-4	233	13	Tennessee	FA-Bal-21	FA-Bal-10
6 Shudak, Caleb	K	5-7	177	1	Iowa	FA-22	FA-Ten-22
4 Stonehouse, Ryan	P	5-10	193	1	Colorado State	FA-22	FA-Ten-22

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	16	Treylon Burks	13	Racey McMath
WR	15	Nick Westbrook-Ikhine	18	Kyle Philips
WR	11	Chris Moore	14	Colton Dowell (R)
LT	77	Peter Skoronski (R)	79	Jaelyn Duncan (R)
LG	71	Andre Dillard	75	Dillon Radunz
C	55	Aaron Brewer	62	Corey Levin
RG	60	Daniel Brunskill	70	Jordan Roos
RT	78	Nicholas Petit-Frere	73	Jamarco Jones
TE	85	Chigoziem Okonkwo	88	Trevon Wesco
QB	17	Ryan Tannehill	8	Will Levis (R)
RB	22	Derrick Henry	32	Tyjae Spears (R)

DEFENSE

DE	96	Denico Autry	92	Jayden Peevy
NT	93	Teair Tart	90	Naquan Jones
DT	98	Jeffery Simmons	79	Curtis Brooks
OLB	58	Harold Landry III	99	Rashad Weaver
ILB	2	Azeez Al-Shaair	47	Ben Niemann
ILB	56	Monty Rice	57	Luke Gifford
OLB	49	Arden Key	59	Sam Okuayinonu
CB	26	Kristian Fulton	24	Elijah Molden
CB	21	Roger McCreary	0	Sean Murphy-Bunting
S	31	Kevin Byard	44	Mike Brown
S	37	Amani Hooker	29	Josh Thompson

SPECIALISTS

K	6	Caleb Shudak	KR	36	Julius Chestnut
P	4	Ryan Stonehouse	PR	18	Kyle Philips

636

Last season, the Titans permitted 636 punt return yards. Nobody else gave up more than 401.

TITANS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: C+

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Peter Skoronski	OL	6-4	313	Northwestern
2.	Will Levis	QB	6-4	229	Kentucky
3.	Tyjae Spears	RB	5-10	200	Tulane
5.	Josh Whyle	TE	6-7	248	Cincinnati
6.	Jaelyn Duncan	OT	6-6	306	Maryland
7.	Colton Dowell	WR	6-3	212	UT Martin

Peter Skoronski should be an immediate starter on an offensive line that suffered losses following an injury-depleted 2022. His strength, physical play and intelligence will make him an ideal fit. If his shorter arms prove an issue at tackle, he is projected to be an excellent guard. Will Levis was the headline maker in the Titans' draft, a great physical specimen who was inconsistent in college. Barring a Ryan Tannehill trade, Levis will start out as a backup. Tyjae Spears, who averaged 6.9 yards per carry and scored 19 touchdowns last season at Tulane, likely will serve as a complementary/third-down back this year, before potentially ascending in 2024 if Derrick Henry moves on.

BRONCOS

AFC WEST FORECAST **3**

2023 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 10	Las Vegas	4:25
Sept. 17	Washington	4:25
Sept. 24	at Miami	1:00
Oct. 1	at Chicago	1:00
Oct. 8	N.Y. Jets	4:25
Oct. 12	at Kansas City	8:15
Oct. 22	Green Bay	4:25
Oct. 29	Kansas City	4:25
Nov. 5	BYE	
Nov. 13	at Buffalo	8:15
Nov. 19	Minnesota	8:20
Nov. 26	Cleveland	4:05
Dec. 3	at Houston	4:05
Dec. 10	at L.A. Chargers	4:25
Dec. 17	at Detroit	TBD
Dec. 24	New England	8:15
Dec. 31	L.A. Chargers	4:25
Jan. 7	at Las Vegas	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

THE COACHES

Head Coach: Sean Payton
Record With Team: 0-0
Career Record: 152-89
Offensive Coordinator: Joe Lombardi
Defensive Coordinator: Vance Joseph
Special Teams Coordinator: Ben Kotwica
Assistant Head Coach: Mike Westhoff
Passing Game Coordinator: John Morton
Quarterbacks: Davis Webb
Running Backs: Lou Ayeni
Wide Receivers: Keary Colbert
Tight Ends: Declan Doyle
Offensive Line: Zach Strief
Defensive Line: Marcus Dixon
Inside Linebackers: Greg Manusky
Outside Linebackers: Michael Wilhoite
Defensive Backs: Christian Parker

The Broncos experienced a cascade of failures in 2022, delivering one of the most disappointing seasons in franchise history (5-12) given the expectations. Quarterback Russell Wilson plummeted from grace with a thud, posting career lows in touchdown passes and completion percentage, and rookie head coach Nathaniel Hackett failed to finish the season.

New ownership wasted no time in changing the culture, trading a first-round pick to New Orleans for the rights to head coach Sean Payton then signing him to a five-year deal. He brings instant credibility and accountability. Payton oversaw a massive free-agent splurge, including bulking up the offensive line. He wants a physical team and promises to run the football with authority.

Payton turned Drew Brees into a future Hall of Famer. His next challenge is clear: He needs to help Wilson rebound and design a team that plays complementary football, ending Denver's seven-year playoff drought.

OFFENSE

Even with a new coach and a new quarterback, the Broncos' offense remained decaffeinated, averaging a league-worst 16.9 points per game. The Broncos have averaged fewer than 21 points a game in each of the past seven years, which explains why they have posted six straight losing seasons. Payton brings an offensive-minded reputation that suggests that the retina-burning Sundays when punts practically outnumber points are finally over.

Payton's attack, historically, has been prolific and dynamic. In 15 seasons, his offenses averaged more than 25 points a game 12 times. Unlike Hackett, who acquiesced to Wilson's demands and foolishly agreed to make him a pocket passer, Payton plans a different approach. He has talked about removing Wilson from "the high dive," reducing the risk-taking and setting him up to flourish with a brutish ground attack. Wilson was sacked 55 times (tied with Justin Fields for most in the NFL) last season. The addition of right tackle Mike McGlinchey and left guard Ben Powers should shrink that total, especially if left tackle Garett Bolles successfully returns from an ugly broken ankle.

The key, however, is balance. Payton wants to run. He added burly veteran Samaje Perine, a man so strong he once lifted a Smart Car so a flat tire could be changed. Perine provides three-down versatility as uncertainty surrounds the return of Javonte Williams from ACL surgery. Payton's commitment to the run game was reflected in the signing of blocking tight end Chris Manhertz and fullback Michael Burton. If the running game produces less than 125 yards per game and 17 touchdowns, it will be a disappointment.

Payton isn't worried about making Wilson comfortable. He is focused on making him successful, and if he's not, it's fair to wonder if Wilson will be gone after this season, even with the brutal salary cap hit.

In light of that fact, the Broncos need more from their receivers. Jerry Jeudy looked like a No. 1 wideout over the final six games of 2022, posting 523 yards and three touchdowns. The team listened to trade calls but held firm on wanting a first-round pick for the former Alabama star. Courtland Sutton was nearly traded to the Ravens and has clearly reached a crossroads in Denver given his 2024 cap number and underwhelming production (two touchdowns in his past 26 games). Tim Patrick returns from a torn ACL after missing last season. It's hard to overstate how much his absence gutted the offense. He provides the fire, personality and reliability and brings the grit Payton seeks from the position.

Speedy KJ Hamler, who has battled numerous injuries over the past two seasons, could be in a battle to keep a roster spot with the arrival of 2023 second-round pick Marvin Mims Jr. Payton acquired tight end Adam Trautman, putting tight ends Greg Dulcich, who flashed as a receiver in his rookie year, and Albert Okwuegbunam, who was inactive for seven games last season, on notice.

Payton and Wilson have a lot to gain if this partnership works, as both are attempting to cement Hall of Fame legacies. It starts with a winning record.

ISAIAH J. DOWNING-USA TODAY SPORTS

DEFENSE

Lost in the ashes was the fact that the Broncos played well on defense, allowing 21.1 points per game and showing creative pressure methods, but they struggled to close out games; nine of Denver's 12 losses were by seven or fewer points. Payton brought in former Broncos head coach Vance Joseph to run the unit and believes the group will finish fourth quarters better with help from the offense, whose inability to stay on the field and win the field position game showed up as the season progressed.

Denver yielded 4.3 yards per carry and 12 rushing touchdowns, a sneaky vulnerability. Joseph arrives with pressure to continue the defense's success, and he'll have no honeymoon period, since Broncos Country still harbors angst over his 11-21 head-coaching record in 2017-18. He will keep the 3-4 scheme, which will be anchored by first-team All-Pro cornerback Pat Surtain II and second-team All-Pro safety Justin Simmons. Surtain was so dominant last season that teams stayed away from him. Continued development from cornerback Damarri Mathis, who was solid as a rookie, is critical, forcing teams to challenge Surtain. Simmons is the sport's best center fielder, posting 16 interceptions over the past three seasons. He has done it all except for play in the playoffs, a shortcoming that fuels him.

The Broncos boast two tackling machines at inside linebacker in Alex Singleton and Josey Jewell but face issues up front where the lack of depth is startling. Nose tackle D.J. Jones delivered as a run-stopper in his first year in Denver, but he needs help. Dre'Mont Jones left as a free agent to Seattle, and the Broncos believe free-agent acquisition Zach Allen will be better because of his inside pass rush, while demonstrating more consistency against the run.

The pass rush features questions. Randy Gregory was disruptive but played in only six games because of knee surgery. Baron Browning showed promise in his first season at outside linebacker and trained this offseason to create more endurance and strength in his legs. Nik Bonitto, last season's second-round pick, needs to step up by adding muscle and more setup moves. If the Broncos run the football as expected, a more rested Denver defense should finish in the top 10 in takeaways and close out games better.

SPECIALISTS

Every time it seems like the Broncos' special teams unit has reached the bottom, it pulls off the manhole cover and dives deeper into the abyss. New boss Ben Kotwica and assistant head coach Mike Westhoff will be charged with creating improvement. Payton uses gained and lost yards to compute victories and will stock better players on special teams. Kicker Brandon McManus needs to rebound after his worst season since 2017 — 77.8 percent field-goal rate — and former punter Riley Dixon is back and ready to demonstrate the consistency that was lacking with Corliss Waitman. Tremon Smith should provide a much-needed boost on kickoff returns, and Mims will be counted on to create chunk plays as a punt returner.

FINAL ANALYSIS

Don't talk about it; be about it. The Broncos ditched the hype videos and media sessions for much of the offseason. Payton wants a tougher, healthier team. They will go through a rugged training camp, and the starters, unlike last summer, will play in the preseason. He wants to create a calloused group capable of handling expectations. The tone will be set from the top, as Payton brings in a welcomed culture of accountability that has created Mike Shanahan vibes among fans. While the playoffs are unlikely, a winning record should not be.

2022 RESULTS (5-12)

Sept. 12	at Seattle	L	16-17
Sept. 18	Houston	W	16-9
Sept. 25	San Francisco	W	11-10
Oct. 2	at Las Vegas	L	23-32
Oct. 6	Indianapolis (ot)	L	9-12
Oct. 17	at L.A. Chargers (ot)	L	16-19
Oct. 23	N.Y. Jets	L	9-16
Oct. 30	vs. Jacksonville	W	21-17
Nov. 13	at Tennessee	L	10-17
Nov. 20	Las Vegas (ot)	L	16-22
Nov. 27	at Carolina	L	10-23
Dec. 4	at Baltimore	L	9-10
Dec. 11	Kansas City	L	28-34
Dec. 18	Arizona	W	24-15
Dec. 25	at L.A. Rams	L	14-51
Jan. 1	at Kansas City	L	24-27
Jan. 8	L.A. Chargers	W	31-28

2022 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	325.1	21	10
Rushing	113.8	21	9
Passing	211.3	19	9
Scoring	16.9	32	16
Third Down %	29.1	32	16
EPA/Play	-0.078	27	13
TO Differential	-1	T16	T8

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	320.0	7	3
Rushing	109.8	10	9
Passing	210.2	12	6
Scoring	21.1	T14	T8
Interceptions	15	T10	5
Sacks	36	T23	12
EPA/Play	-0.042	9	5

2022 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Russell Wilson	483	292	3,524	16	11
Brett Rypien	88	53	483	2	4

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Latavius Murray	160	703	4.4	5
Melvin Gordon III	90	318	3.5	2
Russell Wilson	55	277	5.0	3
Javonte Williams	47	204	4.3	0

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Jerry Jeudy	67	972	14.5	6
Courtland Sutton	64	829	13.0	2
Greg Dulcich	33	411	12.5	2
Latavius Murray	26	124	4.8	0

KICKING: Brandon McManus, 28-36 FGs, 25-27 PAT, 109 points
TACKLES: Alex Singleton, 163; Josey Jewell, 128
SACKS: Dre'Mont Jones, 6.5; Bradley Chubb, 5.5
INTERCEPTIONS: Justin Simmons, 6; three tied with 2

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

PAT ON PAYTON All-Pro cornerback **Pat Surtain II** heard about coach Sean Payton's discipline and accountability when he was hired. He embraced it. After all, he played for Nick Saban at Alabama. "It's something that's in their DNA. It's that type of mentality you look for in great coaches, day in and day out. Those are the qualities you look for in a coach," Surtain says.

GOTTA BE ME Payton brought 152 wins and a Super Bowl ring to Denver. He was hired to change the culture, and that new culture is not a democracy. "You have to be authentic. I can't try to be Bill (Parcells). I have to be who I am. I can laugh at myself. I can be wrong. I can be humble, and I can be confident," Payton says. "I know what it looks like, and I know what it doesn't look like. Sometimes, we are not asking. Sometimes it is not negotiable."

BY THE NUMBERS The Broncos finished last in the NFL at 16.9 points per game last season. They have not averaged 21 points per game since winning Super Bowl 50. Payton's offenses never averaged fewer than 21 points per game in 15 seasons and averaged more than 25 points 12 times.

QUICK FIX Lacking draft capital and strapped with roster needs, the Broncos led the NFL in free-agent spending in the first spring for the Walton-Penner ownership. Denver guaranteed roughly $140 million to 16 players. Will CEO Greg Penner become the George Steinbrenner of the NFL? "You definitely don't win the season in free agency, and you don't necessarily want to have to spend that way each year, but we just felt this year with the lack of draft picks and the needs that we had on the offensive line, that was the approach we needed to take," Penner says. "We just looked at it and said, 'OK, these are our needs, and if we can get these players, we really want to get them.' And, fortunately, we had a lot of conversations leading up to it, we had players that we were targeting and we got all of those players. Again, ideally, you can do that through the draft, and that will be more the approach in the future, but this year it was critical to take this approach."

SCOUTING THE BRONCOS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP DENVER "Sean Payton is already making his presence felt, making it clear to everyone that it's his team and that Russell Wilson won't be given special treatment. I still believe Wilson is salvageable and has something left, if he's coachable this time. … Courtland Sutton was shopped low-key to multiple NFL teams this offseason. It didn't make sense to trade him. The Jerry Jeudy trade discussions were never as serious or close as the media made them out to be. … This offensive line just isn't good enough. They need to overhaul the rest of the line. Mike McGlinchey is a great start to fixing the line. … Getting Javonte Williams back makes the running game click. … Arguably, Jarrett Stidham is as good of a backup as any in the NFL. … I expect Marvin Mims Jr. to play right away. He was excellent at Oklahoma. … Zach Allen — hands down, one of the best free-agent signings. … D.J. Jones does the dirty work, clogging up the middle. … Randy Gregory hasn't been a good investment so far. … No better young corner in the NFL than Pat Surtain II. … Justin Simmons is one of the smartest and rangiest safeties in the league. … Tremon Smith is an under-the-radar signing who will improve the Broncos' secondary and special teams. … Their off-the-ball linebackers (Josey Jewell, Baron Browning and Alex Singleton) are collectively very good and have outstanding teamwork."

STEPHEN R. SYLVANIE/USA TODAY SPORTS

2023 BRONCOS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS.	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
16 Guarantano, Jarrett	QB	6-4	213	1	Washington State	FA-22	FA-Ari-22
4 Stidham, Jarrett	QB	6-2	218	4	Auburn	FA-LV-23	D4b-NE-19
3 Wilson, Russell	QB	5-11	215	11	Wisconsin	T-Sea-22	D3-Sea-12

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
36 Badie, Tyler	RB	5-8	197	1	Missouri	PS-Bal-22	D6-Bal-22
20 Burton, Michael	FB	5-11	242	8	Rutgers	FA-KC-23	D5-Det-15
28 Crockett, Damarea	RB	5-11	225	2	Missouri	FA-22	FA-Hou-19
26 Jones Jr., Tony	RB	5-11	224	3	Notre Dame	FA-Sea-23	FA-NO-20
39 McAllister, Tyreik	RB	5-11	180	1	Charleston (W.V.)	FA-22	FA-Den-22
25 Perine, Samaje	RB	5-11	235	6	Oklahoma	FA-Cin-23	D4a-Was-17
33 Williams, Javonte	RB	5-10	220	2	North Carolina	D2-21	D2-Den-21

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
11 Callaway, Marquez	WR	6-2	204	3	Tennessee	FA-NO-23	FA-NO-20
80 Dulcich, Greg	TE	6-4	245	1	UCLA	D3-22	D3-Den-22
1 Hamler, KJ	WR	5-9	178	3	Penn State	D2-20	D2-Den-20
9 Hinton, Kendall	WR	6-0	195	3	Wake Forest	FA-20	FA-Den-20
17 Humphrey, Lil'Jordan	WR	6-4	225	3	Texas	FA-23	FA-NO-19
10 Jeudy, Jerry	WR	6-1	193	3	Alabama	D1-20	D1-Den-20
84 Manhertz, Chris	TE	6-6	260	7	Canisius	FA-Jac-23	FA-Buf-14
85 Okwuegbunam, Albert	TE	6-5	258	3	Missouri	D4-20	D4-Den-20
81 Patrick, Tim	WR	6-4	212	5	Utah	FA-17	FA-Bal-17
14 Sutton, Courtland	WR	6-4	216	5	SMU	D2-18	D2-Den-18
82 Trautman, Adam	TE	6-5	253	3	Dayton	T-NO-23	D3b-NO-20
15 Virgil, Jalen	WR	6-1	210	1	Appalachian State	FA-22	FA-Den-22
12 Washington, Montrell	WR	5-10	170	1	Samford	D5b-22	D5b-Den-22

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
75 Bailey, Quinn	T	6-6	323	4	Arizona State	FA-19	FA-Den-19
72 Bolles, Garett	T	6-5	300	6	Utah	D1-17	D1-Den-17
79 Cushenberry III, Lloyd	C	6-4	315	3	LSU	D3b-20	D3b-Den-20
67 DiLauro, Christian	T	6-6	300	2	Illinois	FA-22	FA-Cle-18
65 Ferguson, Parker	T	6-4	306	1	Air Force	FA-22	FA-NYJ-21
55 Fuller, Kyle	C/G	6-5	320	6	Baylor	FA-Sea-23	D7-Hou-17
69 McGlinchey, Mike	T	6-8	310	5	Notre Dame	FA-SF-23	D1-SF-18
77 Meinerz, Quinn	G/C	6-3	320	2	Wisc.-Whitewater	D3a-21	D3a-Den-21
74 Powers, Ben	G	6-4	338	4	Oklahoma	FA-Bal-23	D4b-Bal-19
70 Prince, Isaiah	T	6-7	300	4	Ohio State	FA-23	D6-Mia-19
78 Sherman, Will	T	6-4	300	2	Colorado	FA-22	D6-NE-21
68 Thedford, Hunter	T	6-6	260	1	Utah	FA-23	FA-Det-21
60 Wattenberg, Luke	C	6-5	300	1	Washington	D5c-22	D5c-Den-22

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
99 Allen, Zach	DL	6-5	285	4	Boston College	FA-Ari-23	D3-Ari-19
95 Garcia, Elijah	DL	6-5	302	1	Rice	PS-LAR-22	FA-LAR-22
92 Harris, Jonathan	DL	6-5	295	3	Lindenwood	W-Chi-19	FA-Chi-19
91 Henningsen, Matt	DL	6-3	291	1	Wisconsin	D6-22	D6-Den-22
90 Jackson, Jordan	DL	6-5	285	1	Air Force	FA-23	D6-NO-22
93 Jones, D.J.	DT	6-0	305	6	Ole Miss	FA-SF-22	D6a-SF-17
98 Purcell, Mike	DL	6-3	328	7	Wyoming	FA-19	FA-SF-13
96 Uwazurike, Eyioma	DL	6-6	320	1	Iowa State	D4b-22	D4b-Den-22

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
45 Allen, Christopher	OLB	6-4	242	1	Alabama	FA-22	FA-Den-22
42 Bonitto, Nik	OLB	6-3	240	1	Oklahoma	D2-22	D2-Den-22
56 Browning, Baron	OLB	6-3	240	2	Ohio State	D3b-21	D3b-Den-21
53 Cooper, Jonathon	OLB	6-4	257	2	Ohio State	D7b-21	D7b-Den-21
5 Gregory, Randy	OLB	6-5	242	6	Nebraska	FA-Dal-22	D2-Dal-15
50 Griffith, Jonas	ILB	6-4	250	2	Indiana State	T-SF-21	FA-SF-20
47 Jewell, Josey	ILB	6-2	236	5	Iowa	D4a-18	D4a-Den-18
54 Martin, Jacob	LB	6-2	242	4	Temple	T-NYJ-22	D6-Sea-18
94 Patrick, Aaron	OLB	6-4	245	2	Eastern Kentucky	PS-Jac-21	FA-Jac-20
49 Singleton, Alex	ILB	6-2	240	4	Montana State	FA-Phi-22	FA-Sea-15
40 Strnad, Justin	ILB	6-3	235	3	Wake Forest	D5-20	D5-Den-20
43 Wilborn, Ray	LB	6-3	230	2	Ball State	FA-22	FA-Atl-20

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
34 Bassey, Essang	CB	5-10	190	3	Wake Forest	FA-20	FA-Den-20
29 Hicks, Faion	CB	5-10	192	1	Wisconsin	D7-22	D7-Den-22
13 Hood, Delonte	CB	5-11	192	1	Peru State	FA-22	FA-Cin-22
22 Jackson, Kareem	S	5-10	183	13	Alabama	FA-Hou-19	D1-Hou-10
38 Key, Devon	S	6-1	204	1	WKU	FA-22	FA-KC-21
6 Locke, P.J.	S	5-10	202	3	Texas	FA-19	FA-Pit-19
27 Mathis, Damarri	CB	5-11	195	1	Pittsburgh	D4a-22	D4a-Den-22
35 McMillian, Ja'Quan	CB	5-10	183	1	East Carolina	FA-22	FA-Den-22
31 Simmons, Justin	S	6-2	202	7	Boston College	D3-16	D3-Den-16
23 Smith, Tremon	CB	5-11	190	5	Central Arkansas	FA-Hou-23	D6-KC-18
30 Sterns, Caden	S	6-1	207	2	Texas	D5a-21	D5a-Den-21
2 Surtain II, Pat	CB	6-2	202	2	Alabama	D1-21	D1-Den-21
32 Turner-Yell, Delarrin	S	5-11	200	1	Oklahoma	D5a-22	D5a-Den-22
21 Williams, K'Waun	CB	5-9	185	8	Pittsburgh	FA-SF-22	FA-Cle-14

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
19 Dixon, Riley	P	6-4	221	7	Syracuse	FA-LAR-23	D7-Den-16
48 Fraboni, Mitchell	LS	6-2	223	1	Arizona State	FA-22	FA-Hou-21
8 McManus, Brandon	K	6-3	201	9	Temple	T-NYG-14	FA-Ind-13

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	14	Courtland Sutton	11	Marquez Callaway
WR	10	Jerry Jeudy	83	Marvin Mims Jr. (R)
WR	81	Tim Patrick	9	Kendall Hinton
LT	72	Garett Bolles	67	Christian DiLauro
LG	74	Ben Powers	60	Luke Wattenberg
C	79	Lloyd Cushenberry III	55	Kyle Fuller
RG	77	Quinn Meinerz	75	Quinn Bailey
RT	69	Mike McGlinchey	70	Isaiah Prince
TE	80	Greg Dulcich	82	Adam Trautman
QB	3	Russell Wilson	4	Jarrett Stidham
RB	25	Samaje Perine	33	Javonte Williams
FB	20	Michael Burton		

DEFENSE

DE	99	Zach Allen	96	Eyioma Uwazurike
NT	93	D.J. Jones	98	Mike Purcell
DE	91	Matt Henningsen	92	Jonathan Harris
OLB	5	Randy Gregory	53	Jonathon Cooper
ILB	49	Alex Singleton	50	Jonas Griffith
ILB	47	Josey Jewell	40	Justin Strnad
OLB	56	Baron Browning	42	Nik Bonitto
CB	27	Damarri Mathis	23	Tremon Smith
CB	2	Pat Surtain II	35	Ja'Quan McMillan
SS	30	Caden Sterns	22	Kareem Jackson
FS	31	Justin Simmons	6	P.J. Locke

SPECIALISTS

K	8	Brandon McManus	KR 23	Tremon Smith
P	19	Riley Dixon	PR 83	Marvin Mims Jr. (R)

26.5

As if Denver's offense didn't have enough issues in 2022, the Broncos were saddled with the AFC's worst starting field position on average last season, beginning at their own 26.5-yard line.

BRONCOS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
2.	Marvin Mims Jr.	WR	5-11	182	Oklahoma
3.	Drew Sanders	ILB	6-5	233	Arkansas
3.	Riley Moss	CB	6-0	193	Iowa
6.	JL Skinner	S	6-4	220	Boise State
7.	Alex Forsyth	C	6-4	312	Oregon

In his first draft with the Broncos, head coach Sean Payton brought a vision into the process, landing players with versatility and character. He was uncomfortable with the wide receiver room this offseason, flirting with free agents and speed, and he changed it by trading into the second round for Oklahoma receiver Marvin Mims Jr. The Oklahoma receiver will be counted on to provide depth, putting other backups on notice, and boost the return game. The Broncos desperately need a dynamic, smart punt returner. Drew Sanders, who can play inside and outside, and Riley Moss, a corner with safety traits, figure to serve as core special teams players with high football IQ. In the sixth round, Denver added hard-hitting, in-the-box safety JL Skinner and center Alex Forsyth. They can't afford misses. The five-man class was Denver's smallest since 2007.

KC CHIEFS

AFC WEST FORECAST 1

2023 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 7	Detroit	8:20
Sept. 17	at Jacksonville	1:00
Sept. 24	Chicago	4:25
Oct. 1	at N.Y. Jets	8:20
Oct. 8	at Minnesota	4:25
Oct. 12	Denver	8:15
Oct. 22	L.A. Chargers	4:25
Oct. 29	at Denver	4:25
Nov. 5	Miami	9:30
Nov. 12	BYE	
Nov. 20	Philadelphia	8:15
Nov. 26	at Las Vegas	4:25
Dec. 3	at Green Bay	8:20
Dec. 10	Buffalo	4:25
Dec. 18	at New England	4:25
Dec. 25	Las Vegas	1:00
Dec. 31	Cincinnati	4:25
Jan. 7	L.A. Chargers	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

2018	AFC CHAMPIONSHIP GAME	12
2019	SUPER BOWL RUNNER-UP	12
2020	SUPER BOWL CHAMPIONS	14
2021	AFC CHAMPIONSHIP GAME	12
2022	SUPER BOWL CHAMPIONS	14

THE COACHES

Head Coach: Andy Reid
Record With Team: 117-45
Career Record: 247-138-1
Offensive Coordinator: Matt Nagy
Defensive Coordinator: Steve Spagnuolo
Assistant Head Coach/Special Teams Coordinator: Dave Toub
Quarterbacks: David Girardi
Pass Game Coordinator: Joe Bleymaier
Running Backs: Todd Pinkston
Wide Receivers: Connor Embree
Tight Ends: Tom Melvin
Offensive Line: Andy Heck
Defensive Line: Joe Cullen
Linebackers/Run Game Coordinator: Brendan Daly
Outside Linebackers: Ken Flajole
Defensive Backs: Dave Merritt
Safeties: Donald D'Alesio

Are the Chiefs on the cusp of a true dynasty? The 2023 season will answer that question, although some might say they're already there. Since reigning MVP Patrick Mahomes took over as the starting quarterback, the Chiefs have won two Super Bowls, appeared in a third and lost twice in overtime in the AFC Championship game. Another Lombardi Trophy would cement the dynasty — and, as long as Mahomes is healthy, the Chiefs will be in the hunt.

At this point, Super Bowls are all that matters, but Andy Reid's formula always begins with a division title and builds from there. The road to Super Bowl LVIII goes through Arrowhead Stadium until further notice. GM Brett Veach has constructed a deep roster with precious few holes.

OFFENSE

The test for any great QB is to continually elevate a rotating cast of supporting players to make the team greater than the sum of its parts. Mahomes has reached that lofty status, winning MVP honors last season despite losing All-Pro wide receiver Tyreek Hill. He'll need to prove it again after Kansas City's offense turned over both starting tackles, Orlando Brown Jr. (Bengals) and Andrew Wylie (Commanders), and two key wide receivers, JuJu Smith-Schuster (Patriots) and Mecole Hardman Jr. (Jets).

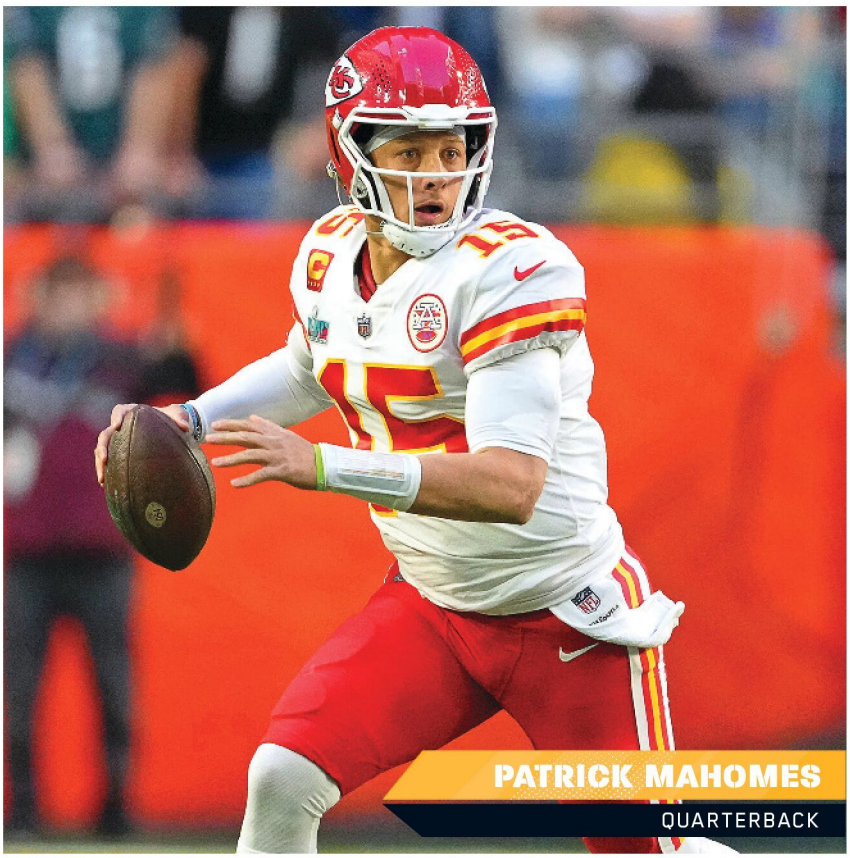
Fortunately for Mahomes, the strength of the Chiefs' offensive line, which has been the interior in recent years, remains unchanged with left guard Joe Thuney, center Creed Humphrey and right guard Trey Smith. Early in free agency, Kansas City signed Jawaan Taylor, an athletic tackle who started the last four seasons with Jacksonville, and publicly expressed faith he could make the switch to the left side. Those plans changed in the days after the draft when the Chiefs signed eight-year veteran LT Donovan Smith, who missed four games with Tampa Bay last season (two early to an elbow injury, two late with a foot injury) to a one-year deal. Smith and Taylor have both been penalty-prone, but both suddenly give the Chiefs lots of depth at tackle — with Lucas Niang, a starter in 2021 before injuring his knee; third-round pick Wanya Morris; and developmental players Prince Tega Wanogho and Darian Kinnard also in line.

While Mahomes still has the most dangerous tight end in NFL history as a security blanket in Travis Kelce, none of the Chiefs' core receivers — Kadarius Toney, Marquez Valdes-Scantling, Skyy Moore, Richie James Jr., Justin Watson and second-round pick Rashee Rice — has been on the roster more than a year. Kansas City is counting on Toney to emerge as a playmaker. Moore also will take on a bigger role, and Rice, who tracks the deep ball well and thrives on contested catches, will be asked to stretch the field. Valdes-Scantling is steady but seldom spectacular. James is best suited to play in the slot. One name to watch at training camp will be Justyn Ross, who has missed two of the last three seasons with injuries but has the talent to be a factor in the offense.

Isiah Pacheco and Jerick McKinnon emerged as a formidable thunder-and-lightning backfield pairing as last season progressed. Pacheco's swaggy, bowling-ball running style endeared him to Chiefs fans, while McKinnon is a monster in pass protection and led all NFL running backs in receiving touchdowns last season (nine). With Clyde Edwards-Helaire still in the mix, Kansas City's backfield committee complements the passing game well, even if it lacks star power. Rounding out the tight end group, Noah Gray is an emerging weapon, Jody Fortson is a dazzling red-zone threat and Blake Bell is a steady veteran.

DEFENSE

Defensive Player of the Year finalist Chris Jones anchors a defense that often and understandably gets overshadowed by the offense. Coordinator Steve Spagnuolo has built a versatile unit that tends to improve as the game and season go along. Kansas City released Frank Clark and lost Khalen Saunders in free agency among other defensive line attrition, but the pass rush may yet improve. After managing only a half-sack in the first 10 games, George Karlaftis had 5.5 in his final seven games as a rookie. Look for Karlaftis and Jones to be paired with former 49ers DE Charles Omenihu and this year's first-round pick, former Kansas State DE Felix Anudike-Uzomah, on pass-rush downs. Omenihu will play on the edge on early downs then reduce inside, similar to Mike Danna's role at times.



The defensive tackle rotation includes Tershawn Wharton behind Jones at the 3-technique with Derrick Nnadi and sixth-round pick Keondre Coburn from Texas at the 1-tech.

A balanced linebacker group — tackling machine Nick Bolton, über-athletic Willie Gay Jr. and ferocious Leo Chenal — got an upgrade with the addition of former Charger Drue Tranquill, who injects coverage skills and a veteran presence.

On the back end, L'Jarius Sneed heads into a contract year as the leader of a young cornerback group. He and second-year pro Trent McDuffie can play inside or outside, while two other second-year players — Jaylen Watson and Joshua Williams — proved capable of playing outside last season. Fourth-round pick Chamarri Conner played safety and nickel at Virginia Tech, and the Chiefs covet that versatility, so he'll have a role at some point in 2023. Nazeeh Johnson and seventh-round pick Nic Jones may battle for a spot on the 53-man roster.

At safety, the Chiefs expected Justin Reid, an intelligent and eloquent former Texans standout, to provide leadership in the secondary, and he thrived in his first year with the club. After losing Juan Thornhill in free agency, Kansas City will ask Bryan Cook, a second-year missile at the position, to take on a bigger role along with veteran free-agent addition Mike Edwards, a former Buccaneers ballhawk. Deon Bush, a core special-teams player, rounds out the group.

SPECIALISTS

The return game took a hit with Hardman's departure, but Toney may be an upgrade anyway. His Super Bowl-record 65-yard punt return turned the tide in the Chiefs' favor and showcased his open-field skills.

It will be interesting to see if Pacheco remains the kick returner. He returned 80 percent of Kansas City's kickoffs last season but may see a bigger workload on offense. If that means a smaller role on special teams, Moore, who will be the backup punt returner, may become the primary kickoff returner.

Punter Tommy Townsend, who led the NFL in net yards per punt (45.6) last season and finished second in punting average (50.4), and kicker Harrison Butker, who struggled through his worst season after suffering a sprained ankle in a season-opening win at Arizona, are entrenched in their roles. Butker made 6-of-7 field goals, including a pair from beyond 50 yards, and all 10 extra points during the Chiefs' playoff run. Long snapper James Winchester's job also seems safe.

FINAL ANALYSIS

If the Chiefs win a third Super Bowl in five seasons, there will be no denying that the NFL's next great dynasty has arrived. Reid, Mahomes, Kelce and Jones won't be together forever, but all four remain at the height of their powers. Veach has been masterful at finding gems in the draft and then backfilling the roster as those picks move into free agency to keep the championship window open year after year. Health is always the X-factor during any NFL season, but if Kansas City's core group avoids the injury bug, they are (and deserve to be) the favorites to chase down yet another Super Bowl title. Undoubtedly, the Chiefs would love to become the first back-to-back champs since New England in 2003-04.

KIRBY LEE/USA TODAY SPORTS

2022 RESULTS (14-3)

Sept.	11	at Arizona	W	44-21
Sept.	15	L.A. Chargers	W	27-24
Sept.	25	at Indianapolis	L	17-20
Oct.	2	at Tampa Bay	W	41-31
Oct.	10	Las Vegas	W	30-29
Oct.	16	Buffalo	L	20-24
Oct.	23	at San Francisco	W	44-23
Nov.	6	Tennessee (ot)	W	20-17
Nov.	13	Jacksonville	W	27-17
Nov.	20	at L.A. Chargers	W	30-27
Nov.	27	L.A. Rams	W	26-10
Dec.	4	at Cincinnati	L	24-27
Dec.	11	at Denver	W	34-28
Dec.	18	at Houston (ot)	W	30-24
Dec.	24	Seattle	W	24-10
Jan.	1	Denver	W	27-24
Jan.	7	at Las Vegas	W	31-13
Postseason				
Jan.	21	Jacksonville	W	27-20
Jan.	29	Cincinnati	W	23-20
Feb.	12	vs. Philadelphia	W	38-35

2022 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	413.6	1	1
Rushing	115.9	20	8
Passing	297.8	1	1
Scoring	29.2	1	1
Third Down %	48.7	2	2
EPA/Play	0.179	1	1
TO Differential	-3	T22	T11

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	328.2	11	6
Rushing	107.2	8	6
Passing	220.9	18	9
Scoring	21.7	16	10
Interceptions	11	T21	T12
Sacks	55	2	1
EPA/Play	-0.001	15	9

2022 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Patrick Mahomes	648	435	5,250	41	12

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Darrel Williams	144	558	3.9	6
C.Edwards-Helaire	119	517	4.3	4
Patrick Mahomes	66	381	5.8	2

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Travis Kelce	110	1,338	12.2	12
J. Smith-Schuster	78	933	12.0	3
Jerick McKinnon	56	512	9.1	9
M. Valdes-Scantling	42	687	16.4	2
Noah Gray	28	299	10.7	1

KICKING: Harrison Butker, 18-24 FGs, 38-41 PAT, 92 points
TACKLES: Nick Bolton, 180; L'Jarius Sneed, 108
SACKS: Chris Jones, 15.5; George Karlaftis, 6.0
INTERCEPTIONS: L'Jarius Sneed, 3; Juan Thornhill, 3

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

OH, BROTHER Chiefs TE **Travis Kelce** and his brother, Eagles C Jason Kelce, who squared off in Super Bowl LVII, co-host "New Heights," the most-popular sports podcast featuring current players in the country. The Kelce brothers let their personalities shine in an often hilarious and raw podcast, which drew a packed house for a star-studded live taping that featured Patrick Mahomes, Roger Goodell and Emmy winner Eric Stonestreet at the Music Hall in Kansas City during the 2023 NFL Draft.

DRAFT MOMENT People in Kansas City go wild for the Chiefs, barbecue and hometown folks who make good, so the final pick in the first round of the 2023 NFL Draft made for one of the Kansas Citiest moments possible. With the draft in the same location where both recent Super Bowl parades ended, the Chiefs took Kansas State DE Felix Anudike-Uzomah, who grew up 20 miles from where the pick was announced on the largest stage ever built for NFL Draft and spent the afternoon before the first round wandering anonymously through the crowd of 125,000.

PRICE OF SUCCESS QB Patrick Mahomes' contract remains the largest in terms of total value in NFL history, but the average annual value and total guaranteed money look paltry given his résumé and recent QB signings. The Mahomes contract's AAV ($45M) and guaranteed money ($141M) rank seventh and eighth in the league, respectively, after Philadelphia's Jalen Hurts and Baltimore's Lamar Jackson reset the market in 2023. Any renegotiation probably won't happen until after Joe Burrow and Justin Herbert get their new deals, too.

A RING FOR EVERY FINGER During an offseason interview, Chris Jones gave a stunning answer when asked how many more rings he wants to win: "If I can get eight to nine more rings, that would be fantastic." It would also be at least one for every finger after Jones and the Chiefs won their second in the last four years to cap the 2022 season. In that same interview, Jones also confessed to loving "SpongeBob SquarePants," especially Squidward, and tickling the ivory, saying his "go-to song" is John Legend's "Ordinary People."

SCOUTING THE CHIEFS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP KANSAS CITY "Leadership is an overriding theme with the champs. They have it on and off the field, and Andy Reid's playcalling is gold standard. … I think they played the tackle situation just right with Orlando Brown Jr. He was never a great culture fit for the Chiefs. … It's hard to fathom this, but Patrick Mahomes is underpaid. The Chiefs will take care of him. How could you not? … Name someone who's really stopped or slowed down Travis Kelce. I'll wait. … It didn't work out in New York, but change of scenery really benefited Kadarius Toney. He's a threat. … Jawaan Taylor's rough-and-tumble style fits the Chiefs' offensive line. … The interior guys (Creed Humphrey, Trey Smith and Joe Thuney) get a ton of push. … Isiah Pacheco, that's good drafting by Brett Veach. … Rashee Rice dropped because of some character concerns, but he can play. He's the kind of prospect Reid will be able to bring along. … I don't think Donovan Smith is a very good left tackle, adequate at best. … Chris Jones is unstoppable. … George Karlaftis has a rare motor. Once he learns to refine his moves, watch out. … Charles Omenihu has a ton of upside, and his best football is ahead of him. … Nick Bolton gets the job done very efficiently in the middle. I see a second deal coming for him in Kansas City. … Justin Reid overcame a slow start. By the end of the season, his tackling angles were a lot better."

KIRBY LEE/USA TODAY SPORTS

2023 CHIEFS VETERAN ROSTER

	QUARTERBACKS	POS.	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
12	Buechele, Shane	QB	6-0	210	2	SMU	FA-21	FA-KC-21
	Gabbert, Blaine	QB	6-5	235	12	Missouri	FA-TB-23	D1-Jac-11
15	Mahomes, Patrick	QB	6-2	225	6	Texas Tech	D1-17	D1-KC-17
14	Oladokun, Chris	QB	6-2	195	1	South Dakota St.	FA-22	FA-Pit-22

	RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
25	Edwards-Helaire, Clyde	RB	5-7	207	3	LSU	D1-20	D1-KC-20
1	McKinnon, Jerick	RB	5-9	209	9	Georgia Southern	FA-SF-21	D3b-Min-14
10	Pacheco, Isiah	RB	5-10	216	1	Rutgers	D7b-22	D7b-KC-22
29	Perine, La'Mical	RB	5-11	216	2	Florida	FA-23	D4-NYJ-20

	RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
81	Bell, Blake	TE	6-6	252	8	Oklahoma	FA-Dal-21	D4-SF-15
80	Blanton, Kendall	TE	6-6	262	3	Missouri	FA-22	FA-LAR-19
49	Bushman, Matt	TE	6-5	245	1	BYU	FA-22	FA-LV-21
89	Ealy, Jerrion	WR	5-8	187	1	Ole Miss	FA-22	FA-KC-22
88	Fortson, Jody	TE	6-4	226	2	Valdosta State	FA-19	FA-KC-19
46	Franks, Jordan	TE	6-4	232	2	UCF	FA-22	FA-Cin-18
83	Gray, Noah	TE	6-3	240	2	Duke	D5a-21	D5a-KC-21
	James Jr., Richie	WR	5-9	185	5	Middle Tennessee	FA-NYG-23	D7b-SF-18
87	Kelce, Travis	TE	6-5	250	10	Cincinnati	D3a-13	D3a-KC-13
24	Moore, Skyy	WR	5-10	195	1	Western Michigan	D2a-22	D2a-KC-22
14	Powell, Cornell	WR	6-0	204	1	Clemson	D5b-21	D5b-KC-21
8	Ross, Justyn	WR	6-4	210	1	Clemson	FA-22	FA-KC-22
82	Smith-Marsette, Ihmir	WR	6-1	185	2	Iowa	FA-22	D5-Min-21
19	Toney, Kadarius	WR	6-0	193	2	Florida	T-NYG-22	D1-NYG-21
11	Valdes-Scantling, M.	WR	6-4	206	5	USF	FA-GB-22	D5c-GB-18
84	Watson, Justin	WR	6-2	215	5	Pennsylvania	FA-22	D5-TB-18

	OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
73	Allegretti, Nick	G	6-4	310	4	Illinois	D7-19	D7-KC-19
66	Caliendo, Michael	OL	6-4	301	1	Western Michigan	FA-22	FA-KC-22
70	Gutierrez, Sebastian	T	6-6	295	1	Minot State	FA-22	FA-Den-22
52	Humphrey, Creed	C	6-4	302	2	Oklahoma	D2b-21	D2b-KC-21
75	Kinnard, Darian	T	6-5	322	1	Kentucky	D5-22	D5-KC-22
67	Niang, Lucas	T	6-6	315	2	TCU	D3-20	D3-KC-20
61	Reiter, Austin	C	6-3	301	7	USF	FA-22	D7-Was-15
	Smith, Donovan	T	6-6	338	8	Penn State	FA-TB-23	D2a-TB-15
65	Smith, Trey	G	6-6	321	2	Tennessee	D6-21	D6-KC-21
74	Taylor, Jawaan	T	6-5	330	4	Florida	FA-Jac-23	D2-Jac-19
62	Thuney, Joe	G	6-5	304	7	NC State	FA-NE-21	D3a-NE-16
70	Wanogho, Prince Tega	T	6-5	25	2	Auburn	FA-20	D6c-Phi-20

	DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
99	Cowart, Byron	DT	6-3	300	4	Maryland	FA-Ind-23	D5a-NE-19
51	Danna, Mike	DE	6-2	257	3	Michigan	D5-20	D5-KC-20
94	Herring, Malik	DE	6-3	275	2	Georgia	FA-21	FA-KC-21
95	Jones, Chris	DT	6-6	310	7	Mississippi State	D2-16	D2-KC-16
59	Kaindoh, Joshua	DE	6-6	260	2	Florida State	D4-21	D4-KC-21
56	Karlaftis, George	DE	6-4	263	1	Purdue	D1b-22	D1b-KC-22
91	Nnadi, Derrick	DT	6-1	317	5	Florida State	D3a-18	D3a-KC-18
90	Omenihu, Charles	DL	6-5	280	4	Texas	FA-SF-23	D5-Hou-19
71	Shelton, Danny	NT	6-2	345	8	Washington	FA-22	D1a-Cle-15
98	Wharton, Tershawn	DT	6-1	280	3	Missouri S&T	FA-20	FA-KC-20
66	Williams, Brandon	DT	6-1	336	10	Missouri Southern	FA-22	D3-Bal-13

	LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
32	Bolton, Nick	LB	5-11	237	2	Missouri	D2a-21	D2a-KC-21
54	Chenal, Leo	LB	6-3	250	1	Wisconsin	D3-22	D3-KC-22
48	Christiansen, Cole	LB	6-1	230	1	Army	FA-22	FA-LAC-20
43	Cochrane, Jack	LB	6-3	236	1	South Dakota	FA-22	FA-KC-22
50	Gay Jr., Willie	LB	6-1	243	3	Mississippi State	D2-20	D2-KC-20
47	Harris, Darius	LB	6-2	232	3	Middle Tennessee	FA-19	FA-KC-19
23	Tranquill, Drue	LB	6-2	234	4	Notre Dame	FA-LAC-23	D4-LAC-19

	DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
30	Bootle, Dicaprio	CB	5-10	180	1	Nebraska	FA-21	FA-KC-21
26	Bush, Deon	S	6-0	200	7	Miami (Fla.)	FA-Chi-22	D4b-Chi-16
6	Cook, Bryan	S	6-1	206	1	Cincinnati	D2b-22	D2b-KC-22
21	Edwards, Mike	S	5-10	205	4	Kentucky	FA-TB-23	D3b-TB-19
13	Johnson, Nazeeh	S	5-10	199	1	Marshall	D7c-22	D7c-KC-22
22	McDuffie, Trent	CB	5-11	193	1	Washington	D1a-22	D1a-KC-22
20	Reid, Justin	S	6-1	207	5	Stanford	FA-Hou-22	D3a-Hou-18
38	Sneed, L'Jarius	CB	6-1	192	3	Louisiana Tech	D4-20	D4-KC-20
35	Watson, Jaylen	CB	6-2	197	1	Washington State	D7a-22	D7a-KC-22
23	Williams, Joshua	CB	6-3	193	1	Fayetteville State	D4-22	D4-KC-22

	SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
7	Butker, Harrison	K	6-4	199	6	Georgia Tech	FA-17	FA-Car-17
5	Townsend, Tommy	P	6-1	191	3	Florida	FA-20	FA-KC-20
41	Winchester, James	LS	6-3	209	8	Oklahoma	FA-15	FA-Phi-13

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	11	Mar. Valdes-Scantling	4	Rashee Rice (R)
WR	19	Kadarius Toney	84	Justin Watson
WR	24	Skyy Moore		Richie James Jr.
LT		Donovan Smith	64	Wanya Morris (R)
LG	62	Joe Thuney	73	Nick Allegretti
C	52	Creed Humphrey	61	Austin Reiter
RG	65	Trey Smith	75	Darian Kinnard
RT	74	Jawaan Taylor	67	Lucas Niang
TE	87	Travis Kelce	83	Noah Gray
QB	15	Patrick Mahomes		Blaine Gabbert
RB	10	Isiah Pacheco	1	Jerick McKinnon

DEFENSE

DE	56	George Karlaftis	51	Mike Danna
DT	91	Derrick Nnadi	99	Keondre Coburn (R)
DT	95	Chris Jones	98	Tershawn Wharton
DE	90	Charles Omenihu	97	F. Anudike-Uzomah (R)
LB	50	Willie Gay Jr.	54	Leo Chenal
LB	32	Nick Bolton	23	Drue Tranquill
CB	21	Trent McDuffie	27	Chamarri Conner (R)
CB	38	L'Jarius Sneed	2	Joshua Williams
NB	35	Jaylen Watson	13	Nazeeh Johnson
S	6	Bryan Cook	21	Mike Edwards
S	20	Justin Reid	26	Deon Bush

SPECIALISTS

K	7	Harrison Butker	KR	10 Isiah Pacheco
P	5	Tommy Townsend	PR	19 Kadarius Toney

8.5

Patrick Mahomes led the Chiefs to the top ranking in adjusted yards per pass attempt, coming in at 8.5, highest among qualifiers.

CHIEFS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Felix Anudike-Uzomah	DE	6-4	255	Kansas State
2.	Rashee Rice	WR	6-2	203	SMU
3.	Wanya Morris	OT	6-5	317	Oklahoma
4.	Chamarri Conner	S	6-0	202	Virginia Tech
5.	BJ Thompson	DE	6-6	240	Stephen F. Austin
6.	Keondre Coburn	DT	6-2	332	Texas
7.	Nic Jones	CB	6-0	189	Ball State

Kansas City had three main needs in the draft and addressed each in the first three rounds. Felix Anudike-Uzomah replaces Frank Clark and gives the Chiefs young, controllable, durable D-line bookends for the foreseeable future paired with last year's first-round pick, George Karlaftis. Rashee Rice brings a unique physical presence to a wide receiver room that lost JuJu Smith-Schuster and Mecole Hardman Jr., while Wanya Morris provides reinforcement up front after both starting tackles — Orlando Brown Jr. and Andrew Wylie — left via free agency. Kansas City focused on premium defensive positions in the later rounds with two secondary and defensive line picks apiece.

LV RAIDERS

AFC WEST FORECAST **4**

As the Raiders head into Year 2 under Josh McDaniels, they have some ground to make up after last year's 6-11 finish completely ruined all the goodwill from the playoff appearance in 2021.

That said, their return to earth actually painted a more complete picture of who they really are and the various roster issues they have to correct. That makes 2023 a bit of a multi-layered task. The Raiders want to win right now, but there is an understanding that sustained winning only comes with a more complete roster. And that takes time.

In the interim, they hope to add a higher level of efficiency and competency in a reworked offensive lineup that better suits McDaniels' vision — replacing Derek Carr with Jimmy Garoppolo is the biggest change — while pouring as much financial and draft capital as possible in rebuilding their defense.

The latter is of utmost importance but also will require the most patience. Years of bad draft decisions left that side of the ball seriously depleted. They hope they took a step in the right direction with a six-player defensive draft class that delivered dynamic pass rusher Tyree Wilson from Texas Tech.

Las Vegas' offense will score points. And if some of the rookies and young players hit on defense, the Raiders could set a ceiling of a nine-win team that knocks on the door of the playoffs. Think of the Seahawks last season, rallying around Geno Smith and hitting on multiple draft picks.

OFFENSE

The Raiders decided to move on from Carr toward the middle of last season. Garoppolo, with his knowledge of McDaniels' offense and winning pedigree, is the perfect replacement, at least in the interim. Adding Garoppolo sends a message to the locker room and fanbase that by no means is this a full rebuild. In fact, the efficiency he shows in areas of the field that have plagued the Raiders for years — the red zone comes to mind — could provide an upgrade over Carr. There is no reason Garoppolo can't flourish given the talent he has around him.

Tailback Josh Jacobs is coming off an NFL-leading 1,653-yard season. Davante Adams dominated in his first season with the Raiders with 100 catches for 1,516 yards and 14 touchdowns and, at 30, shows no signs of slowing down. New wide receiver Jakobi Meyers, who worked with McDaniels in New England, understands the offense and is a consistent producer. Rookie tight end Michael Mayer is the perfect replacement for Darren Waller, who had trouble staying on the field the past two years. The offensive line opened holes for the NFL's leading rusher and surrendered the 10th-fewest sacks (35) in the NFL.

Garoppolo is stepping into a great situation. Of course, the key is keeping him healthy, which has been a career-long problem for the former 49ers standout. If that issue follows him to Las Vegas, Brian Hoyer, who worked with McDaniels in New England, is the proverbial next man up, although Purdue rookie Aidan O'Connell will factor in as well.

This offense has speed and production and can attack on the ground and all levels of the defense.

DEFENSE

As well constructed as the Raiders' offense is, the defense has an equal amount of uncertainty. In fact, the only legitimate hope for the foreseeable future is that the offense protects a gradually improving defense while outscoring opponents along the way.

2023 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 10	at Denver	4:25
Sept. 17	at Buffalo	1:00
Sept. 24	Pittsburgh	8:20
Oct. 1	at L.A. Chargers	4:05
Oct. 9	Green Bay	8:15
Oct. 15	New England	4:05
Oct. 22	at Chicago	1:00
Oct. 30	at Detroit	8:15
Nov. 5	N.Y. Giants	4:25
Nov. 12	N.Y. Jets	8:20
Nov. 19	at Miami	1:00
Nov. 26	Kansas City	4:25
Dec. 3	BYE	
Dec. 10	Minnesota	4:05
Dec. 14	L.A. Chargers	8:15
Dec. 25	at Kansas City	1:00
Dec. 31	at Indianapolis	1:00
Jan. 7	Week 18: Denver	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

THE COACHES

Head Coach: Josh McDaniels
Record With Team: 6-11
Career Record: 17-28
Offensive Coordinator: Mick Lombardi
Defensive Coordinator: Patrick Graham
Special Teams Coordinator: Tom McMahon
Quarterbacks: Bo Hardegree
Running Backs: Kennedy Polamalu
Wide Receivers: Edgar Bennett
Tight Ends: Jerry Schuplinski
Offensive Line: Carmen Bricillo
Defensive Line: Rob Leonard
Linebackers: Antonio Pierce
Defensive Backs: Chris Ash
Defensive Backs/Pass Game Coordinator: Jason Simmons

That doesn't mean the defense can't take a noticeable step forward this year. But it will require some key components stepping up.

First, Chandler Jones, whom the Raiders signed to a big free-agent deal last year, needs to rebound from a slow season (112 career sacks, but only 4.5 in 2022). The Raiders also need rookie rush end Wilson, the seventh pick overall in the 2023 draft, to deliver quality snaps in conjunction with Jones and Maxx Crosby.

Rookie interior defensive lineman Byron Young and second-year defensive tackles Neil Farrell Jr. and Matthew Butler need to settle in as reliable rotational players, if not starters.

A young linebacker group needs newcomer Robert Spillane to hit big and holdovers Luke Masterson and Divine Deablo to take big steps forward.

Finally, a secondary that features the addition of seven new players — including two promising rookies and veterans Marcus Epps, David Long Jr. and Duke Shelley — needs to quickly form a cohesive unit along with holdovers Nate Hobbs and Tre'von Moehrig.

Those are a lot of ifs that need to fall the right way for the Raiders. Is that realistic? That is the biggest question of all.

The bottom line: The Raiders gladly will take genuine growth and development on defense and easily identifiable improvement. Once and for all, the Raiders need to move in a positive direction on that side of the ball.

There is talent on hand. But work to be done, too.

DAVANTE ADAMS
WIDE RECEIVER

CHRISTOPHER HANEWINCKEL/USA TODAY SPORTS

SPECIALISTS

The Raiders are about as well set up as anyone on special teams, a group that continued to grow over the course of last year above and beyond the typical brilliance this club gets from kicker Daniel Carlson and punter AJ Cole.

The kickers, in particular, have been outstanding and provide a definite edge. That does not figure to change, especially with the Raiders playing half of their games indoors, although both Carlson and Cole are capable regardless of the conditions. The Raiders have done well in kick and punt returns and coverage, and the return game could get a boost from rookie Tre Tucker, who was outstanding in that area at Cincinnati.

FINAL ANALYSIS

The Raiders were guilty of overestimating exactly where they were in 2021 when they punched their ticket to the playoffs. It's why they signed veteran pass rusher Jones to a big contract and traded for star wide receiver Adams. In retrospect, the 2021 team needed a miraculous amount of good fortune to win its final four games and equal amounts of unbelievable help from others along the way.

The Raiders under McDaniels and general manager Dave Ziegler want to be better than a team that just punches a lucky ticket to the playoffs every few years. They want to be a perennial power that is looked on as a model franchise and an annual team to beat. Getting there takes time, and it also takes making good personnel decisions year after year.

It led the Raiders to walk away from Carr and Waller and regroup. In some ways, they are trying to thread a narrow needle, as they want to win and create a winning culture while also making the necessary roster changes to ensure long-term success.

They hope to do that with what they believe can be a top-10 NFL offense — it ranked 12th in 2022 — and a defense that shows a noticeable level of improvement.

There is a ceiling, though, at least this season. And a lot has to go right for that ceiling to be reached.

2022 RESULTS (6-11)

Sept.	11	at L.A. Chargers	L	19-24
Sept.	18	Arizona (ot)	L	23-29
Sept.	25	at Tennessee	L	22-24
Oct.	2	Denver	W	32-23
Oct.	10	at Kansas City	L	29-30
Oct.	23	Houston	W	38-20
Oct.	30	at New Orleans	L	0-24
Nov.	6	at Jacksonville	L	20-27
Nov.	13	Indianapolis	L	20-25
Nov.	20	at Denver (ot)	W	22-16
Nov.	27	at Seattle (ot)	W	40-34
Dec.	4	L.A. Chargers	W	27-20
Dec.	8	at L.A. Rams	L	16-17
Dec.	18	New England	W	30-24
Dec.	24	at Pittsburgh	L	10-13
Jan.	1	San Francisco (ot)	L	34-37
Jan.	7	Kansas City	L	13-31

2022 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	352.5	12	7
Rushing	121.1	17	7
Passing	231.4	T11	7
Scoring	23.2	12	6
Third Down %	39.9	16	8
EPA/Play	0.009	15	8
TO Differential	-8	30	15

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	365.6	28	15
Rushing	122.8	19	12
Passing	242.9	29	15
Scoring	24.6	26	14
Interceptions	6	T31	16
Sacks	27	30	16
EPA/Play	0.069	30	16

2022 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Derek Carr	502	305	3,522	24	14
Jarrett Stidham	83	53	656	4	3

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Josh Jacobs	340	1,653	4.9	12
Derek Carr	24	102	4.3	0

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Davante Adams	100	1,516	15.2	14
Mack Hollins	57	690	12.1	4
Josh Jacobs	53	400	7.5	0
Hunter Renfrow	36	330	9.2	2
Foster Moreau	33	420	12.7	2
Darren Waller	28	388	13.9	3

KICKING: Daniel Carlson, 34-37 FGs, 35-36 PAT, 137 points
TACKLES: Maxx Crosby, 89; Duron Harmon, 86
SACKS: Maxx Crosby, 12.5; Chandler Jones, 4.5
INTERCEPTIONS: Duron Harmon, 2; Denzel Perryman, 2; Amik Robertson, 2

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

JIMMY G AND JOSH MCDANIELS PART II New Raider QB **Jimmy Garoppolo** credits Josh McDaniels with teaching him how to be an NFL quarterback back in their days together in New England. But he also remembers the first interaction he had with his former and now current coach, which was memorable. During Garoppolo's personal visit with the Patriots, McDaniels had him in his office for some football talk, and to this day Garoppolo thinks McDaniels set him up. "He was running me through the offense on the board and I don't know if it was planned, but I swear he planned it and Tom Brady walked in," Garoppolo remembers. Needless to say it got his attention. "And I thought it was to throw me off a little bit because I've never met him before — a little starstruck," Garoppolo said. "But, yeah, he walked out and everything, Josh kept going with the teaching and that was our first interaction."

FAMILY AFFAIR When the Raiders added Florida's Amari Burney through the draft, they did more than just reel in a playmaking rookie linebacker. They also created a bit of a family reunion. Burney is the cousin of Raiders cornerback Brandon Facyson. Burney made that abundantly clear on draft night and made a case for his cousin to help him out on a place to live. "He's got an apartment, so I told him, 'Give me a room in the apartment.'" Burney said, laughing. "I'm not trying to buy my own right now."

HITTING ALL THE RIGHT NOTES Michael Mayer wasn't planning on saying something that would immediately hit the right nerve with Raiders fans. It just sort of happened organically. But the words that spilled out of his mouth on draft night clearly resonated with his new team and its rabid fan base. The big, physical hulking tight end from Notre Dame was merely citing some of what drives him and he prepares to take the next step in his career. Then, all of a sudden he expressed a side of him that clearly struck a chord with the fans. "I like to put people in the dirt, and I like to run over people," Mayer said, bluntly. Yeah, that went over pretty well.

SCOUTING THE RAIDERS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP LAS VEGAS "Jimmy Garoppolo in Las Vegas could work. He's still got some skills. You know going in he's likely not going to play every game. That's why you have Brian Hoyer, who can hold serve if Jimmy gets hurt again. From a scheme standpoint, Jimmy fits in really well. … Davante Adams lived up to the contract, even with some deficiencies from Derek Carr. … Kolton Miller is their only really talented offensive lineman. I don't see a ton of upside with the other guys. … Using the franchise tag on Josh Jacobs and running it back one more time with him made a lot of sense. … One of the best aspects of the Raiders' offense is the tight end position with Austin Hooper and Michael Mayer. … Jakobi Meyers should inject a lot of YAC into their offense. … It was a really underwhelming debut for Chandler Jones. I thought he had a shaky start, for sure. … Maxx Crosby is the Energizer Bunny, never stops chasing, never stops working moves, and he's got a lot of them. … This isn't a good linebacker corps, at all. … Nate Hobbs is one of the best nickel backs in the game. That's one of the few draft picks in recent years who's really hit for this organization. … Tre'von Moehrig has good quickness, and he'll hit. … Tyree Wilson fell on some teams' draft boards, but the expectation is that he'll be able to get healthy and contribute this year. Whether he can stay healthy is the big-picture question."

CANDICE WARD/USA TODAY SPORTS

2023 RAIDERS VETERAN ROSTER

	QUARTERBACKS	POS.	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
10	Garoppolo, Jimmy	QB	6-2	225	9	Eastern Illinois	FA-SF-23	D2-NE-14
15	Garbers, Chase	QB	6-2	215	1	California	FA-22	FA-LV-22
7	Hoyer, Brian	QB	6-2	216	14	Michigan State	FA-NE-23	FA-NE-09
	RUNNING BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
22	Abdullah, Ameer	RB	5-8	203	8	Nebraska	FA-Car-22	D2-Det-15
34	Bolden, Brandon	RB	5-11	220	10	Ole Miss	FA-NE-22	FA-NE-12
38	Brown, Brittain	RB	6-0	210	1	UCLA	D7b-22	D7b-LV-22
28	Jacobs, Josh	RB	5-10	220	4	Alabama	D1b-19	D1b-LV-19
45	Johnson, Jakob	FB	6-3	255	4	Tennessee	FA-NE-22	FA-NE-19
36	McCormick, Sincere	RB	5-9	205	1	UTSA	FA-22	FA-LV-22
32	Walter, Austin	RB	5-8	190	3	Rice	FA-22	FA-SF-19
35	White, Zamir	RB	5-11	214	1	Georgia	D4a-22	D4a-LV-22
	RECEIVERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
17	Adams, Davante	WR	6-1	215	9	Fresno State	T-GB-22	D2-GB-14
3	Carter, DeAndre	WR	5-8	190	5	Sacramento State	FA-LAC-23	FA-Bal-15
84	Cole Sr., Keelan	WR	6-1	194	6	Kentucky Wesleyan	FA-22	FA-Jac-17
11	Dorsett II, Phillip	WR	5-10	192	8	Miami (Fla.)	FA-Hou-23	D1-Ind-15
85	Fotheringham, Cole	TE	6-4	246	1	Utah	FA-22	FA-LV-22
82	Hooper, Austin	TE	6-4	254	7	Stanford	FA-Ten-23	D3-Atl-16
80	Horsted, Jesper	TE	6-3	241	4	Princeton	FA-22	FA-Chi-19
88	Howard, O.J.	TE	6-6	251	6	Alabama	FA-Hou-23	D1-TB-17
18	Johnson, Tyler	WR	6-1	206	3	Minnesota	FA-23	D5-TB-20
14	Lacy, Chris	WR	6-3	206	2	Oklahoma State	FA-22	FA-NE-18
16	Meyers, Jakobi	WR	6-2	200	4	NC State	FA-NE-23	FA-NE-19
13	Renfrow, Hunter	WR	5-10	185	4	Clemson	D5-19	D5-LV-19
81	Sims, Cam	WR	6-5	220	5	Alabama	FA-Was-23	FA-Was-18
19	Turner, DJ	WR	5-9	206	1	Pittsburgh	FA-21	FA-LV-21
	OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
64	Bars, Alex	G	6-5	334	4	Notre Dame	FA-Chi-22	FA-Chi-19
72	Eluemunor, Jermaine	G/T	6-4	335	6	Texas A&M	FA-21	D5-Bal-17
65	Grasu, Hroniss	C	6-3	300	7	Oregon	FA-21	D3-Chi-13
73	Gurman, Vitaliy	OL	6-3	305	1	Toledo	FA-22	FA-KC-22
71	Herron, Justin	T	6-5	305	3	Wake Forest	T-NE-22	D6b-NE-20
68	James, Andre	C	6-4	300	4	UCLA	FA-19	FA-LV-19
61	Meredith, Jordan	G	6-2	302	1	WKU	FA-22	FA-LAR-21
74	Miller, Kolton	T	6-8	309	5	UCLA	D1-18	D1-LV-18
77	Munford Jr., Thayer	T	6-5	328	1	Ohio State	D7a-22	D7a-LV-22
67	Murray, Justin	G/T	6-5	315	5	Cincinnati	FA-23	FA-Den-16
54	Muti, Netane	G	6-3	315	3	Fresno State	FA-22	D6-Den-20
66	Parham, Dylan	G	6-2	311	1	Memphis	D3-22	D3-LV-22
75	Parker, Brandon	T	6-7	305	5	North Carolina A&T	D3a-18	D3a-LV-18
	DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
69	Butler, Adam	DL	6-5	295	5	Vanderbilt	FA-23	FA-NE-17
94	Butler, Matthew	DT	6-3	297	1	Tennessee	D5-22	D5-LV-22
98	Crosby, Maxx	DE	6-5	255	4	Eastern Michigan	D4a-19	D4a-LV-19
92	Farrell Jr., Neil	DT	6-4	330	1	LSU	D4b-22	D4b-LV-22
95	Jenkins, John	DT	6-3	340	10	Georgia	FA-Mia-23	D3-NO-13
51	Koonce, Malcolm	DE	6-2	249	2	Buffalo	D3a-21	D3a-LV-21
91	Nichols, Bilal	DT	6-4	290	5	Delaware	FA-Chi-22	D5-Chi-18
93	Peko, Kyle	DT	6-1	298	4	Oregon State	FA-Ten-22	FA-Den-16
90	Tillery, Jerry	DL	6-6	295	4	Notre Dame	D1-19	D1-LV-19
99	Willis, Jordan	DL	6-4	270	6	Kansas State	FA-SF-23	D3-Cin-17
	LINEBACKERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
36	Bolton, Curtis	LB	6-0	228	2	Oklahoma	FA-22	FA-GB-19
58	Butler, Darien	LB	5-10	221	1	Arizona State	FA-22	FA-LV-22
5	Deablo, Divine	LB	6-3	226	2	Virginia Tech	D3b-21	D3b-LV-21
55	Jones, Chandler	LB	6-5	266	11	Syracuse	FA-Ari-22	D1-NE-12
59	Masterson, Luke	LB	6-1	234	1	Wake Forest	FA-22	FA-LV-22
43	Mauga, Kana'i	LB	6-2	245	1	USC	FA-22	FA-Den-22
42	Spillane, Robert	LB	6-1	229	4	Western Michigan	FA-Pit-23	FA-Ten-18
	DEFENSIVE BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
46	Brown, Ike	CB	6-0	185	1	FIU	FA-22	FA-Buf-20
44	Cosby, Bryce	CB	5-9	188	1	Ball State	FA-22	FA-LV-22
40	Elliott, Jalen	S	6-0	206	2	Notre Dame	FA-22	FA-Det-20
1	Epps, Marcus	S	6-0	191	4	Wyoming	FA-Phi-23	D6-Min-19
31	Facyson, Brandon	CB	6-2	197	5	Virginia Tech	FA-Ind-23	FA-LAC-18
37	Hall, Tyler	CB	5-10	190	3	Wyoming	FA-22	FA-Atl-20
39	Hobbs, Nate	CB	6-1	196	2	Illinois	D5-21	D5-LV-21
26	Johnson, Jaquan	S	5-10	191	4	Miami (Fla.)	FA-Buf-23	D6-Buf-19
24	Long Jr., David	CB	5-11	196	4	Michigan	FA-LAR-23	D3b-LAR-19
25	Moehrig, Tre'von	S	6-0	202	2	TCU	D2-21	D2-LV-21
20	Pola-Mao, Isaiah	S	6-3	211	1	USC	FA-22	FA-LV-22
21	Robertson, Amik	CB	5-8	187	3	Louisiana Tech	D4b-20	D4b-LV-20
23	Shelley, Duke	CB	5-9	176	4	Kansas State	FA-Min-23	D6-Chi-19
33	Teamer, Roderic	S	5-10	187	3	Tulane	FA-21	FA-LAC-19
27	Webb, Sam	CB	6-0	202	1	Missouri Western	FA-22	FA-LV-22
	SPECIALISTS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
50	Bobenmoyer, Jacob	LS	6-2	235	3	Northern Colorado	FA-Den-23	FA-Den-20
2	Carlson, Daniel	K	6-5	215	5	Auburn	FA-18	D5-Min-18
6	Cole, AJ	P	6-4	220	4	NC State	FA-19	FA-LV-19

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	17	Davante Adams	84	Keelan Cole Sr.
WR	13	Hunter Renfrow		Tre Tucker (R)
WR	16	Jakobi Meyers	11	Phillip Dorsett II
LT	74	Kolton Miller	71	Justin Herron
LG	66	Dylan Parham		McClendon Curtis (R)
C	68	Andre James	65	Hroniss Grasu
RG	64	Alex Bars	54	Netane Muti
RT	72	Jermaine Eluemunor	77	Thayer Munford Jr.
TE		Michael Mayer (R)	82	Austin Hooper
QB	10	Jimmy Garoppolo	7	Brian Hoyer
RB	28	Josh Jacobs	35	Zamir White

DEFENSE

DE	98	Maxx Crosby	99	Jordan Willis
DT	91	Bilal Nichols	92	Neil Farrell Jr.
DT		Byron Young (R)	90	Jerry Tillery
OLB	55	Chandler Jones		Tyree Wilson (R)
ILB	42	Robert Spillane	58	Darien Butler
ILB	59	Luke Masterson		Drake Thomas (R)
OLB	5	Divine Deablo		Amari Burney (R)
CB	39	Nate Hobbs	27	Sam Webb
CB	31	Brandon Facyson		Jakorian Bennett (R)
SS	1	Marcus Epps	20	Isaiah Pola-Mao
FS	25	Tre'von Moehrig		Christopher Smith II (R)

SPECIALISTS

K	2	Daniel Carlson	KR		Tre Tucker (R)
P	6	AJ Cole	PR	3	DeAndre Carter

-119.40

The Raiders struggled all year to get stops, exemplified by an AFC-worst -119.40 expected points contributed by the passing defense, per Pro Football Reference.

RAIDERS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Tyree Wilson	Edge	6-6	271	Texas Tech
2.	Michael Mayer	TE	6-4	265	Notre Dame
3.	Byron Young	DT	6-3	297	Alabama
3.	Tre Tucker	WR	5-9	187	Cincinnati
4.	Jakorian Bennett	CB	5-11	195	Maryland
4.	Aidan O'Connell	QB	6-3	212	Purdue
5.	Christopher Smith II	S	5-10	188	Georgia
6.	Amari Burney	LB	6-1	233	Florida
7.	Nesta Jade Silvera	DT	6-1	307	Arizona State

The Raiders added as many as three Day 1 starters in Tyree Wilson, Michael Mayer and Byron Young with their first three picks, with Wilson and Mayer both in position to have breakthrough rookie seasons. Wilson is a much-needed edge rusher, and Mayer is one of the most polished rookie tight ends in a while. They also addressed the secondary in Jakorian Bennett and Christopher Smith II, a pair of players who combined for 11 interceptions over the past two seasons and, in Bennett's case, more pass breakups (29) than games played (27) during his college career. Aidan O'Connell, an accurate, heady passer, fits the Raiders' scheme and can be brought along slowly behind Jimmy Garoppolo.

CHARGERS

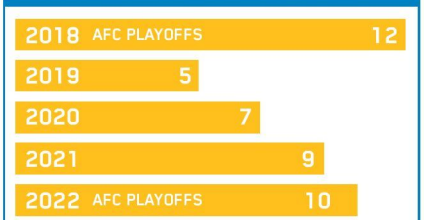
AFC WEST FORECAST **2**

2023 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 10	Miami	4:25
Sept. 17	at Tennessee	1:00
Sept. 24	at Minnesota	1:00
Oct. 1	Las Vegas	4:05
Oct. 8	BYE	
Oct. 16	Dallas	8:15
Oct. 22	at Kansas City	4:25
Oct. 29	Chicago	8:20
Nov. 6	at N.Y. Jets	8:15
Nov. 12	Detroit	4:05
Nov. 19	at Green Bay	1:00
Nov. 26	Baltimore	8:20
Dec. 3	at New England	1:00
Dec. 10	Denver	4:25
Dec. 14	at Las Vegas	8:15
Dec. 23	Buffalo	8:00
Dec. 31	at Denver	4:25
Jan. 7	Kansas City	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND



THE COACHES

Head Coach: Brandon Staley
Record With Team: 19-15
Career Record: 19-15
Offensive Coordinator: Kellen Moore
Defensive Coordinator: Derrick Ansley
Special Teams Coordinator: Ryan Ficken
Passing Game Specialist: Tom Arth
Quarterbacks: Doug Nussmeier
Running Backs: Derrick Foster
Wide Receivers: Chris Beatty
Tight Ends: Kevin Koger
Offensive Line: Brendan Nugent
Defensive Run Game Coordinator/Defensive Line: Jay Rodgers
Linebackers: Jeff Howard
Outside Linebackers: Giff Smith
Passing Game Coordinator/Secondary: Tom Donatell

For most NFL teams, the offseason offers a clean slate with an abundance of hope for the upcoming season. But the Chargers didn't get that luxury after the clock hit zero in Jacksonville to complete their historic postseason collapse. The Chargers knew from experience that their blown 27-point lead to the Jaguars was going to hover like a dark cloud throughout the offseason, the same way it did the prior year after the team lost a thrilling Week 18 matchup to the Raiders in overtime to miss the postseason.

Head coach Brandon Staley's tenure as the Chargers' head coach has featured plenty of heartbreak, but from a glass-half-full approach, they've gotten better the past two seasons. Now the next step is for quarterback Justin Herbert and the talented Chargers to get rid of the stigma of coming up short by winning postseason games. Staley's 2023 group appears similar to last year's roster, and the Super Bowl window might be closing soon for this core that features veterans such as edge rusher Khalil Mack and wide receiver Keenan Allen. With a messy salary cap situation on the horizon, the Chargers need to strike now to avoid another gloomy offseason and a potential shake-up throughout the organization. The pressure is high, but the Chargers have the pieces to surpass expectations.

OFFENSE

Regardless of what occurs this season, Herbert isn't going anywhere. But he has high expectations to guide the Chargers to a lengthy postseason run, similar to what his 2020 draftmates Joe Burrow and Jalen Hurts have done for their respective teams as Super Bowl participants. Herbert is lacking playoff success, but his skill set rivals what Patrick Mahomes provides for the Chiefs, and perhaps he can reach another level with new offensive coordinator Kellen Moore, an aggressive play-caller known for pushing the ball downfield. Herbert often saw conservative plays with former Chargers OC Joe Lombardi the past two seasons.

The Chargers lack speed on the outside, but they have plenty of size with a pair of 6-foot-4 targets in Mike Williams, one of the best jump-ball receivers in the league, and rookie Quentin Johnston, who displayed burst after the catch in college. The Chargers also have versatile wideouts Allen, a five-time Pro Bowler, and Joshua Palmer, a promising third-year player. Palmer might get the No. 3 wideout job to start the season, but Johnston could surpass him if he quickly finds his stride as a downfield threat.

Last season, the Chargers missed left tackle Rashawn Slater after he sustained a season-ending biceps injury in Week 3. But Jamaree Salyer did a serviceable job filling in for Slater as a rookie and will now be the team's starting right guard next to right tackle Trey Pipkins III, who also surprised many with improved play in 2022. Zion Johnson, the team's first-round pick last year, is scheduled to move from right to left guard, and former Pro Bowl center Corey Linsley is back for his third season in L.A. If this starting unit stays healthy, Herbert might operate behind one of the best offensive lines in the NFL.

The Chargers are lacking a true No. 1 tight end, but Herbert has quality red-zone targets in Gerald Everett and Donald Parham Jr.

Dynamic running back Austin Ekeler requested a trade because of a contract dispute, but it appears he'll be back in Los Angeles and will have plenty to play for during a contract year. Ekeler, however, will need help in the backfield from

ISAIAH J. DOWNING-USA TODAY SPORTS

Joshua Kelley and Isaiah Spiller. With more than 200 carries in each of the past two seasons, the 5-10 Ekeler probably won't be able to withstand that type of workload again.

DEFENSE

Staley's defense finally showed improvements last season with a dominant stretch run into the postseason. They can build off that with the pass-rushing duo of Joey Bosa and Mack, who played only five games together because of Bosa's groin injury. The Pro Bowl edge rushers will also get help from rookie Tuli Tuipulotu, the team's second-round pick.

The Chargers will also get back defensive tackle Austin Johnson, who suffered a season-ending knee injury midway through last season. Defensive tackles Sebastian Joseph-Day and Morgan Fox provide versatility in the interior of the defensive line as productive pass rushers and stout run defenders.

Inside linebacker Eric Kendricks was the team's biggest free-agent acquisition. Kendricks' instincts will help the defense play faster, and his knowledge will help inside linebacker Kenneth Murray Jr., the 2020 first-round pick who had his fifth-year option declined on his rookie deal. But Kendricks is entering his ninth season and struggled in coverage last season. The Chargers likely won't rely on their linebackers often for obvious passing situations on third downs. Murray might have to compete for snaps with rookie Daiyan Henley, the team's third-round selection.

The Chargers can get away with playing linebackers sparingly because of the presence of All-Pro safety Derwin James Jr., who can defend tight ends and rush the passer. But James might be forced to help more in the back end of the defense because of safeties Alohi Gilman, who struggles with consistency, and JT Woods, who seldom played during his rookie season. Also, the Chargers might not have cornerback J.C. Jackson for the start of the season because of the gruesome knee injury he suffered last season. Perhaps talented cornerbacks Michael Davis and Asante Samuel Jr. can elevate their games to allow James to roam the field.

SPECIALISTS

The Chargers have a good problem — in Cameron Dicker and Dustin Hopkins, the team has two standout kickers on the roster. But this starting competition probably won't make it to training camp because Hopkins has a cap number of about $3 million. Dicker is younger and not as expensive, and more importantly, he drilled some clutch kicks for the Chargers last season. JK Scott is back as the team's punter after a productive 2022 season. Rookie wide receiver Derius Davis could handle both kickoff and punt returns after Staley praised the fourth-round pick for his speed.

FINAL ANALYSIS

The Super Bowl window might be closing, but the Chargers have the right pieces to make a run this year with an elite quarterback in Herbert, a stout offensive line and playmakers on defense with Bosa, Mack and James. But Staley's defense might be thin in the secondary, which doesn't bode well in a stacked AFC with Mahomes, Burrow, Aaron Rodgers, Lamar Jackson, Josh Allen and Trevor Lawrence. Roster depth, however, isn't the problem for the Chargers. It's seizing the moment in must-win games and avoiding collapses that have lingering effects. Herbert has elite skills, but he needs to prove he can turn the Chargers into real contenders in the AFC West before eying a Super Bowl trophy.

2022 RESULTS (10-7)

Sept. 11	Las Vegas	W	24-19
Sept. 15	at Kansas City	L	24-27
Sept. 25	Jacksonville	L	10-38
Oct. 2	at Houston	W	34-24
Oct. 9	at Cleveland	W	30-28
Oct. 17	Denver (ot)	W	19-16
Oct. 23	Seattle	L	23-37
Nov. 6	at Atlanta	W	20-17
Nov. 13	at San Francisco	L	16-22
Nov. 20	Kansas City	L	27-30
Nov. 27	at Arizona	W	25-24
Dec. 4	at Las Vegas	L	20-27
Dec. 11	Miami	W	23-17
Dec. 18	Tennessee	W	17-14
Dec. 26	at Indianapolis	W	20-3
Jan. 1	L.A. Rams	W	31-10
Jan. 8	at Denver	L	28-31
Postseason			
Jan. 14	at Jacksonville	L	30-31

2022 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	359.3	9	5
Rushing	89.6	30	15
Passing	269.6	3	2
Scoring	23.0	13	7
Third Down %	43.6	8	5
EPA/Play	0.007	16	9
TO Differential	+5	T7	T3

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	346.1	20	12
Rushing	145.8	28	15
Passing	200.4	7	3
Scoring	22.6	T21	12
Interceptions	14	T12	T6
Sacks	40	T14	T6
EPA/Play	0.012	19	11

2022 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Justin Herbert	672	443	5,014	38	15

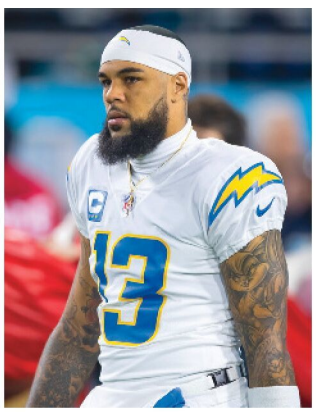
RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Austin Ekeler	204	915	4.5	13
Joshua Kelley	69	287	4.2	2
Justin Herbert	54	147	2.7	0

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Austin Ekeler	107	722	6.7	5
Joshua Palmer	72	769	10.7	3
Keenan Allen	66	752	11.4	4
Mike Williams	63	895	14.2	4
Gerald Everett	58	555	9.6	4
DeAndre Carter	46	538	11.7	3

KICKING: Cameron Dicker, 19-20 FGs, 22-22 PAT, 108 points
TACKLES: Drue Tranquill, 146; Derwin James Jr., 115
SACKS: Khalil Mack, 8.0; Morgan Fox, 6.5
INTERCEPTIONS: Bryce Callahan, 3; three tied with 2

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

MILESTONE WATCH A Chargers "Outside the Huddle" isn't complete without mentioning a few impressive milestones from star quarterback Justin Herbert, the only player in NFL history to start a career with three consecutive seasons of at least 4,000 passing yards. Herbert has also thrown for at least 25 passing touchdowns in each of his first three seasons, joining Peyton Manning as the only players to accomplish that feat.



STEPPING UP With **Keenan Allen** sidelined, many Chargers pass-catchers stepped up to keep the team afloat before advancing to the postseason for the first time since 2018. The Chargers set a single-season NFL record by having six different players record at least 500 receiving yards and three receiving touchdowns, a list that includes Allen, Mike Williams, Joshua Palmer, Austin Ekeler, Gerald Everett and DeAndre Carter.

CAR TALK Eric Kendricks couldn't say how his partnership with fellow linebacker Kenneth Murray Jr. would look on the field during his introductory news conference, but the two instantly built a connection off the field because of their affinity for cars. The two spoke at length about cars while attending a Formula Drift event in Long Beach, Calif.

A MESSAGE FOR MOM One of the best sound bites of the 2023 NFL draft was from Chargers rookie wide receiver Quentin Johnston, who told his mother she could put in her two weeks' notice at work because she could now retire with her son in the NFL. Johnston's family and friends erupted in applause with his mother nearby beaming with joy after Johnston's memorable quote on draft night. "I don't want you working another day," he later added. Johnston won over the Chargers because of his high upside on the field, but also for his high character.

SCOUTING THE CHARGERS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP LOS ANGELES "Zero questions about Justin Herbert under center. He's the real deal. He's got every tool you want for a quarterback: height, arm, mobility, accuracy, smarts, guts. Every box checked. Can't fault him for the playoff game. That's on the coaching staff and the defensive deficiencies. … Brandon Staley barely got to come back. He's on a hot seat heading into this season. He's not a terrible coach. He's a smart guy, but the decisions he's made really don't bear that out frequently enough and with a high enough success rate. … What a great receiving corps. Keenan Allen runs sharp routes and has soft hands. Mike Williams, great length, body control and leaping ability. Quentin Johnston should be excellent as a deep threat and jump-ball guy. … Tight end isn't bad, but it's not great with Gerald Everett and Donald Parham Jr. … Rashawn Slater's injury impacted this offense in a major way last year. … Zion Johnson got better and better as the year went on. Lot better pick than Kenyon Green, the Texans' guard. … Corey Linsley is one of the better centers in the NFL. … The contract dispute with Austin Ekeler keeps lingering. … Name me a better pass-rushing tandem than Joey Bosa and Khalil Mack. There isn't one in the NFL. Bosa has everything you want as a pass rusher. … Kenneth Murray Jr. has been nearly a complete bust. … I thought Asante Samuel Jr. did a really good job as a rookie last year. … Derwin James Jr. sees the game differently than most safeties. His angles and speed are rare commodities. He's a playmaker."

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2023 CHARGERS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS.	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
10 Herbert, Justin	QB	6-6	236	3	Oregon	D1a-20	D1a-LAC-20
2 Stick, Easton	QB	6-1	224	4	North Dakota St.	D5-19	D5-LAC-19

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
30 Ekeler, Austin	RB	5-10	200	6	Western State	FA-17	FA-LAC-17
40 Horvath, Zander	FB	6-3	230	1	Purdue	D7b-22	D7b-LAC-22
25 Kelley, Joshua	RB	5-11	212	3	UCLA	D4-20	D4-LAC-20
34 Rountree III, Larry	RB	5-10	211	2	Missouri	D6b-21	D6b-LAC-21
28 Spiller, Isaiah	RB	6-1	215	1	Texas A&M	D4-22	D4-LAC-22

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
13 Allen, Keenan	WR	6-2	211	10	California	D3-13	D3-LAC-13
86 Doss, Keelan	WR	6-3	215	2	UC Davis	FA-22	FA-LV-19
7 Everett, Gerald	TE	6-3	240	6	South Alabama	FA-Sea-22	D2-LAR-17
15 Guyton, Jalen	WR	6-1	212	3	North Texas	FA-19	FA-Dal-19
84 Hightower, John	WR	6-2	190	2	Boise State	FA-22	D5-Phi-20
87 Kampmoyer, Hunter	TE	6-4	243	1	Oregon	FA-21	FA-LAC-21
88 McKitty, Tre'	TE	6-4	246	2	Georgia	D3b-21	D3b-LAC-21
11 Moore Jr., Jason	WR	6-3	215	2	Findlay	FA-19	FA-LAC-19
5 Palmer, Joshua	WR	6-1	210	2	Tennessee	D3a-21	D3a-LAC-21
89 Parham Jr., Donald	TE	6-8	237	4	Stetson	FA-20	FA-Det-20
80 Reed, Joe	WR	6-0	224	2	Virginia	D5-20	D5-LAC-20
48 Smartt, Stone	TE	6-4	226	1	Old Dominion	FA-22	FA-LAC-22
81 Williams, Mike	WR	6-4	218	6	Clemson	D1-17	D1-LAC-17

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
78 Bailey, Zack	T	6-5	300	2	South Carolina	W-Was-22	FA-TB-19
76 Clapp, Will	C/G	6-5	311	5	LSU	FA-22	D7-NO-18
64 Jaimes, Brenden	G/T	6-5	300	2	Nebraska	D5-21	D5-LAC-21
77 Johnson, Zion	G	6-3	316	1	Boston College	D1-22	D1-LAC-22
63 Linsley, Corey	C	6-3	301	9	Ohio State	FA-GB-21	D5a-GB-14
79 Pipkins III, Trey	T	6-6	307	4	Sioux Falls	D3-19	D3-LAC-19
75 Pleasants, Austen	G/T	6-7	330	1	Ohio	FA-22	FA-Jac-20
68 Salyer, Jamaree	OL	6-4	325	1	Georgia	D6a-22	D6a-LAC-22
73 Sarell, Foster	T	6-6	322	1	Stanford	FA-21	FA-Bal-21
70 Slater, Rashawn	T	6-4	315	2	Northwestern	D1-21	D1-LAC-21
62 Trainer, Andrew	T	6-7	320	1	William & Mary	FA-22	FA-LAC-22
60 Weaver, Isaac	C	6-6	310	1	Old Dominion	FA-22	FA-LAC-22

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
56 Fox, Morgan	DL	6-3	275	6	Colorado St.-Pueblo	FA-22	FA-LAR-16
91 Hinton, Christopher	DL	6-4	310	1	Michigan	FA-22	FA-NYG-22
98 Johnson, Austin	DL	6-4	314	7	Penn State	FA-NYG-22	D2b-Ten-16
51 Joseph-Day, Sebastian	DL	6-4	310	5	Rutgers	FA-LAR-22	D6c-LAR-18
91 Merrill, Forrest	DL	6-0	322	1	Arkansas State	FA-21	FA-LAC-21
50 Moa, David	DL	6-3	296	1	Boise State	FA-22	FA-Min-20
93 Ogbonnia, Otito	DL	6-4	320	1	UCLA	D5-22	D5-LAC-22

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
97 Bosa, Joey	OLB	6-5	280	7	Ohio State	D1-16	D1-LAC-16
54 Kemp, Carlo	OLB	6-3	281	1	Michigan	FA-22	FA-GB-21
6 Kendricks, Eric	LB	6-0	232	8	UCLA	FA-Min-23	D2-Min-15
53 Lloyd, Damon	LB	6-0	235	2	Indiana (PA)	FA-21	FA-LAC-21
52 Mack, Khalil	OLB	6-3	269	9	Buffalo	T-Chi-22	D1-LV-14
58 Maddox-Williams, Tyreek	LB	6-0	228	1	Rutgers	FA-22	FA-LAC-22
9 Murray Jr., Kenneth	LB	6-2	241	3	Oklahoma	D1b-20	D1b-LAC-20
31 Niemann, Nick	LB	6-3	234	2	Iowa	D6a-21	D6a-LAC-21
57 Ogbongbemiga, Amen	LB	6-0	231	2	Oklahoma State	FA-21	FA-LAC-21
94 Rumph II, Chris	OLB	6-2	244	2	Duke	D4-21	D4-LAC-21

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
43 Davis, Michael	CB	6-2	196	6	BYU	FA-17	FA-LAC-17
32 Gilman, Alohi	S	5-10	201	3	Notre Dame	D6-20	D6-LAC-20
37 Hall, Kemon	CB	5-11	190	2	North Texas	W-Dal-21	FA-LAC-19
27 Jackson, J.C.	CB	6-1	198	5	Maryland	FA-NE-22	FA-NE-18
39 Jacquet, Michael	CB	6-2	201	2	Louisiana	FA-22	FA-Phi-20
3 James Jr., Derwin	S	6-2	215	5	Florida State	D1-18	D1-LAC-18
41 Layne, Raheem	S	5-11	192	1	Indiana	FA-22	FA-LAC-22
33 Leonard, Deane	DB	6-0	195	1	Ole Miss	D7a-22	D7a-LAC-22
26 Samuel Jr., Asante	CB	5-10	180	2	Florida State	D2-21	D2-LAC-21
36 Taylor, Ja'Sir	DB	5-10	185	1	Wake Forest	D6b-22	D6b-LAC-22
29 Webb Jr., Mark	DB	6-1	207	2	Georgia	D7-21	D7-LAC-21
22 Woods, JT	S	6-2	193	1	Baylor	D3-22	D3-LAC-22

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
11 Dicker, Cameron	K	6-1	216	1	Texas	FA-22	FA-LAR-22
47 Harris, Josh	LS	6-1	224	11	Auburn	FA-Atl-22	FA-Atl-12
6 Hopkins, Dustin	K	6-2	193	9	Florida State	FA-21	D6-Buf-13
16 Scott, JK	P	6-5	208	4	Alabama	FA-22	D5b-GB-18

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	81	Mike Williams	1	Quentin Johnston (R)
WR	13	Keenan Allen	15	Jalen Guyton
WR	5	Joshua Palmer	12	Derius Davis (R)
LT	70	Rashawn Slater	73	Foster Sarell
LG	77	Zion Johnson	64	Brenden Jaimes
C	63	Corey Linsley	76	Will Clapp
RG	68	Jamaree Salyer	71	Jordan McFadden (R)
RT	79	Trey Pipkins III	62	Andrew Trainer
TE	7	Gerald Everett	89	Donald Parham Jr.
QB	10	Justin Herbert	2	Easton Stick
RB	30	Austin Ekeler	25	Joshua Kelley

DEFENSE

DL	56	Morgan Fox	50	David Moa
NT	98	Austin Johnson	93	Otito Ogbonnia
DT	51	Sebastian Joseph-Day	99	Scott Matlock (R)
OLB	97	Joey Bosa	94	Chris Rumph II
ILB	6	Eric Kendricks	57	Amen Ogbongbemiga
ILB	9	Kenneth Murray Jr.	0	Daiyan Henley (R)
OLB	52	Khalil Mack	45	Tuli Tuipulotu (R)
CB	43	Michael Davis	27	J.C. Jackson
CB	26	Asante Samuel Jr.	36	Ja'Sir Taylor
SS	3	Derwin James Jr.	29	Mark Webb Jr.
FS	32	Alohi Gilman	22	JT Woods

SPECIALISTS

K	11	Cameron Dicker	KR 12	Derius Davis (R)
P	16	JK Scott	PR 12	Derius Davis (R)

182

Justin Herbert faced 182 blitzes last season per Pro Football Reference. This was tops among all AFC quarterbacks and second only to the Lions' Jared Goff in the NFL.

CHARGERS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B-

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Quentin Johnston	WR	6-4	215	TCU
2.	Tuli Tuipulotu	OLB	6-4	290	USC
3.	Daiyan Henley	LB	6-1	230	Washington St.
4.	Derius Davis	WR	5-8	168	TCU
5.	Jordan McFadden	OG	6-2	295	Clemson
6.	Scott Matlock	DT	6-4	308	Boise State
7.	Max Duggan	QB	6-1	204	TCU

The Chargers chose Quentin Johnston's high ceiling over current needs, which could hurt them this season with holes in the secondary. Also, Johnston might not make an immediate impact because he'll likely start the season as the fourth option on the wide receiver depth chart. But if Johnston reaches his potential and develops reliable hands, he might become the next star receiver for Justin Herbert — and a possible replacement for Keenan Allen next season. Tuli Tuipulotu fills a need as the third pass rusher behind Joey Bosa and Khalil Mack. Daiyan Henley could be a steal for the Chargers because some draft experts viewed the fast and physical playmaker as a second-round prospect.

NFC

NFC PLAYOFF SEEDS

1. Philadelphia Eagles
2. Seattle Seahawks
3. Green Bay Packers
4. Carolina Panthers
5. San Francisco 49ers
6. Dallas Cowboys
7. Detroit Lions

WILD CARD WEEKEND

(2) Seahawks over (7) Lions

(6) Cowboys over (3) Packers

(5) 49ers over (4) Panthers

DIVISIONAL ROUND

(2) Seahawks over (5) 49ers

(1) Eagles over (6) Cowboys

CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

(2) Seahawks over (1) Eagles

SUPER BOWL LVIII

(1) Chiefs over (2) Seahawks

PREDICTIONS

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH FOR THE FOUR DIVISIONS

NFC EAST

1. Philadelphia EAGLES
2. Dallas COWBOYS
3. New York GIANTS
4. Washington COMMANDERS

NFC NORTH

1. Green Bay PACKERS
2. Detroit LIONS
3. Minnesota VIKINGS
4. Chicago BEARS

NFC SOUTH

1. Carolina PANTHERS
2. New Orleans SAINTS
3. Atlanta FALCONS
4. Tampa Bay BUCCANEERS

NFC WEST

1. Seattle SEAHAWKS
2. San Francisco 49ERS
3. Los Angeles RAMS
4. Arizona CARDINALS

NFC POWER RANKINGS

1. Philadelphia Eagles
2. Seattle Seahawks
3. San Francisco 49ers
4. Dallas Cowboys
5. Green Bay Packers
6. Detroit Lions
7. Carolina Panthers
8. New York Giants
9. Washington Commanders
10. New Orleans Saints
11. Atlanta Falcons
12. Minnesota Vikings
13. Los Angeles Rams
14. Chicago Bears
15. Tampa Bay Buccaneers
16. Arizona Cardinals

SUPERLATIVES

Offensive POY
CHRISTIAN McCAFFREY, RB, 49ERS

Defensive POY
MICAH PARSONS, EDGE, COWBOYS

Comeback POY
MICHAEL THOMAS, WR, SAINTS

Offensive ROY
BIJAN ROBINSON, RB, FALCONS

Defensive ROY
NOLAN SMITH, EDGE, EAGLES

Coach of the Year
PETE CARROLL, SEAHAWKS

NFC COACHING CAROUSEL

HEAD COACHES

CAROLINA PANTHERS

Old: Matt Rhule | New: Frank Reich

The former Colts head coach seeks a fresh start with yet another franchise that will be breaking in a new quarterback: No. 1 pick Bryce Young. Reich appears to be a better fit in Charlotte than his predecessor (Rhule), who was more of a college program builder. Reich is capable of maximizing the talent currently in place in Carolina.

ARIZONA CARDINALS

Old: Kliff Kingsbury | New: Jonathan Gannon

The somewhat tumultuous and ultimately unsuccessful Kingsbury regime did have flashes of promise — many of them involving mercurial quarterback Kyler Murray, who is Gannon's problem (and opportunity) now. Gannon led a championship-caliber defense in Philly, and he has some talent to work with on that side of the ball in Arizona.

COORDINATORS

ARIZONA CARDINALS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR

Old: Kliff Kingsbury | New: Drew Petzing

Petzing, far from a household name in NFL coaching circles, will become one if he can maximize quarterback Kyler Murray's talents and focus. Petzing says, "One of the appealing things about this job to me was being able to work with a quarterback of his caliber."

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR

Old: Vance Joseph | New: Nick Rallis

Rallis, who turns 30 in July, joins the Cardinals' reboot, getting his first NFL coordinator job after two seasons as the linebackers coach in Philadelphia. The fast-rising Rallis, the NFL's youngest coordinator, could find himself on a head-coaching track after a little more seasoning.

ATLANTA FALCONS

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR

Old: Dean Pees | New: Ryan Nielsen

The Falcons grabbed Nielsen, a well-traveled 44-year-old, from the NFC South rival Saints, where he had served as co-defensive coordinator. His Saints defense ranked second in the NFL against the pass in 2022.

CAROLINA PANTHERS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR

Old: Ben McAdoo
New: Thomas Brown

Sean McVay disciple Brown takes the reins of the Panthers' offense. The rookie coordinator will team with a rookie QB (Young) as Carolina reboots under Frank Reich.

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR

Old: Phil Snow
New: Ejiro Evero

Evero's defense in Denver ranked seventh in the NFL in total defense. He won a Super Bowl ring with the Rams the season prior as secondary coach and passing game coordinator.

DALLAS COWBOYS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR

Old: Kellen Moore
New: Brian Schottenheimer

The longtime NFL assistant is charged with coaxing a Super Bowl run out of Dak Prescott & Co. He did get the best out of Russell Wilson as Seattle's OC in 2018, when he threw 35 TDs and only seven interceptions,

LOS ANGELES RAMS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR

Old: Liam Coen
New: Mike LaFleur

LaFleur is part of a coaching family; his brother Matt is the head coach for the Packers. Mike LaFleur was most recently the offensive coordinator for the Jets, where he couldn't quite make Zach Wilson happen.

MINNESOTA VIKINGS

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR

Old: Ed Donatell
New: Brian Flores

Flores' head-coaching résumé is mixed, but his record as a defensive assistant in New England and Pittsburgh is impressive. The Vikings ranked next-to-last in the NFL in total defense in 2022.

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR

Old: Ryan Nielsen/Kris Richard
New: Joe Woods

Woods is coming off a three-season stint as the Browns' defensive coordinator, during which time Cleveland ranked 17th, fifth and 14th in the NFL in total defense.

PHILADELPHIA EAGLES

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR

Old: Shane Steichen
New: Brian Johnson

The Eagles saw their coaching staff raided following their Super Bowl run, losing both coordinators to head-coaching jobs. Johnson was promoted from quarterbacks coach, ensuring continuity for Jalen Hurts.

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR

Old: Jonathan Gannon
New: Sean Desai

Desai has built a solid defensive résumé in his decade-plus on NFL sidelines. As defensive coordinator for Chicago in 2021, Desai coached a unit that ranked sixth in the NFL in total defense.

SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR

Old: DeMeco Ryans
New: Steve Wilks

After a respectable stint (6-6) as Carolina's interim head coach last season following Matt Rhule's firing, Wilks inherits the top defense in the NFC.

TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR

Old: Byron Leftwich
New: Dave Canales

Canales will try to harness Baker Mayfield's talents after helping resurrect Geno Smith's career in his one season as quarterbacks coach in Seattle, where Smith earned Comeback Player of the Year honors in 2022.

WASHINGTON COMMANDERS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR

Old: Scott Turner
New: Eric Bieniemy

Bieniemy, long a head-coaching prospect, finally gets to call his own offense out from under Andy Reid's sizable shadow. Washington ranked 24th last season in scoring (18.9 ppg).

DAL COWBOYS

NFC EAST FORECAST 2

2023 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 10	at N.Y. Giants	8:20
Sept. 17	N.Y. Jets	4:25
Sept. 24	at Arizona	4:25
Oct. 1	New England	4:25
Oct. 8	at San Francisco	8:20
Oct. 16	at L.A. Chargers	8:15
Oct. 22	BYE	
Oct. 29	L.A. Rams	1:00
Nov. 5	at Philadelphia	4:25
Nov. 12	N.Y. Giants	4:25
Nov. 19	at Carolina	1:00
Nov. 23	Washington	4:30
Nov. 30	Seattle	8:15
Dec. 10	Philadelphia	8:20
Dec. 17	at Buffalo	4:25
Dec. 24	at Miami	4:25
Dec. 31	Detroit	8:15
Jan. 7	at Washington	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

THE COACHES

Head Coach: Mike McCarthy
Record With Team: 30-20
Career Record: 155-97-2
Offensive Coordinator: Brian Schottenheimer
Defensive Coordinator: Dan Quinn
Special Teams Coordinator: John Fassel
Quarterbacks: Scott Tolzien
Run Game Coordinator/Running Backs: Jeff Blasko
Wide Receivers: Robert Prince
Tight Ends: Lunda Wells
Offensive Line: Mike Solari
Defensive Line: Aden Durde
Linebackers: Scott McCurley
Defensive Backs: Al Harris
Secondary/Defensive Pass Game Coordinator: Joe Whitt Jr.

The Cowboys face a new year with the same expectations. They haven't won the Super Bowl since the 1995 season, which was also the last time they reached the NFC Championship Game. Still, the Cowboys enter 2023 with the same Super Bowl hopes they have had for the past 27 seasons.

The team, though, might have a better chance than it has had in a while.

The Cowboys are coming off back-to-back 12-win seasons for the first time since winning three Super Bowls in four seasons in the 1990s, and they made offseason trades that delivered cornerback Stephon Gilmore and receiver Brandin Cooks. They also added a starting defensive tackle (Mazi Smith) and a starting tight end (Luke Schoonmaker) in the first two rounds of the draft.

Head coach Mike McCarthy enters his fourth season on the hottest of coaching hot seats, but he is going back to what delivered a Super Bowl to Green Bay. He will call plays for the first time in Dallas after the Cowboys parted ways with offensive coordinator Kellen Moore. McCarthy's job is on the line.

OFFENSE

McCarthy called the plays for all 13 of his seasons as the Packers' head coach. The Packers ranked in the top 10 in points nine times during that span, including twice leading the league, and in yards nine times. He estimates he changed 30 to 35 percent of the team's playbook for this season. Nothing will help the Cowboys' offense more than Dak Prescott taking better care of the football, however. No quarterback threw more interceptions in 2022 than Prescott, who had 15 in 12-regular season games and two more in the playoffs. That's too many for the Cowboys to get to where they want to go. So, QB and head coach pored over each pick from last season to attempt to figure out how to help Prescott avoid such miscues. Keeping him on the field also will help. He has not played a full season since 2019, missing five games with an injured thumb last season. The Cowboys re-signed Cooper Rush to back up Prescott. Rush is 5-1 the past two seasons as a starter with eight touchdowns and four interceptions.

McCarthy cites "philosophical differences" in explaining Moore's departure. He says he wants to "run the damn ball so I can rest my defense." The Cowboys already had the sixth-most rushing attempts last season with 531, but they released Ezekiel Elliott in the offseason. Pro Bowler Tony Pollard returns on the franchise tag as the team's top tailback after a career-high 1,007 rushing yards and 12 total touchdowns in 2022. The Cowboys signed Ronald Jones II in free agency after he played only 38 offensive snaps in six games last season with the Chiefs. Jones has not played special teams full time since his rookie season, something he might have to prove he can do again. The Cowboys have high hopes for Malik Davis, who had 38 carries for 161 yards and a touchdown in his rookie season, and they drafted Deuce Vaughn, who is small but was productive at Kansas State.

The Cowboys insist they don't regret the 2022 trade of No. 1 receiver Amari Cooper. They should. Noah Brown was the team's second-leading wideout last season with 43 catches for 555 yards and three touchdowns. Brown left in free agency, and the Cowboys upgraded with the trade for Cooks, who caught 57 passes for 699 yards and three touchdowns in 13 games for the Texans last season. CeeDee Lamb remains the No.1 receiver and Prescott's favorite target. Michael Gallup returned from a torn anterior cruciate ligament in less than a year, and he played like it, missing the first three games of the 2022 season and finishing with a disappointing 39 receptions for 424 yards and four touchdowns.

Gallup faces an important 2023 season, in what could be his final campaign in Dallas without a better performance.

Tight end Dalton Schultz is gone, but the Cowboys have Jake Ferguson returning. Ferguson showed promise as a rookie and will compete for the starting job with 2023 second-round pick Schoonmaker. Peyton Hendershot and Sean McKeon round out the depth chart at the position.

Tyler Smith took over the starting left tackle job as a rookie after Tyron Smith's injury before the season opener. Tyron Smith, a perennial Pro Bowler at the position, moved to right tackle when he returned. He had not played the right side since 2011. Starting right tackle Terence Steele returns from a torn ACL. That means one of Tyler Smith, Tyron Smith or Steele likely will play left guard so the Cowboys can get their best five offensive linemen on the field together. All-Pro Zack Martin remains the best right guard in the NFL and is making a case for the best ever at the position. Tyler Biadasz is back as the starting center. The Cowboys will cross-train Josh Ball at guard and tackle for depth.

DEFENSE

Dan Quinn is back as the defensive coordinator for a third season, and if he continues doing what he's done with the Cowboys, Quinn could have a second chance as a head coach soon. The Cowboys ranked 12th in total defense and sixth in scoring defense last season. Of course, it helps having one of the top defensive playmakers in the league. In two seasons, Micah Parsons has become just that. he pass-rushing linebacker — Quinn says Parsons isn't moving to defensive end (yet?) — has 26.5 sacks, 56 quarterback hits, 33 tackles for a loss and six forced fumbles, earning All-Pro honors both seasons. Dorance Armstrong Jr. had the second-most sacks on the team last season with a career-high 8.5; he has turned into a solid edge rusher. The Cowboys need more from DeMarcus Lawrence, who hasn't had double-digit sacks since 2018. He earned Pro Bowl honors last season but managed only six sacks despite facing offenses worried about Parsons and Armstrong. Dante Fowler Jr. and Sam Williams return as the top options behind Armstrong and Lawrence. The Cowboys drafted defensive tackle Smith in the first round, and the run-stopper will help the interior of the line with Osa Odighizuwa, Neville Gallimore and Johnathan Hankins among the options beside him.

The Cowboys have Leighton Vander Esch back at middle linebacker, an important re-signing after he made 90 tackles last season. It was his best — and healthiest — season since his rookie season of 2018. He and third-round pick DeMarvion Overshown both are versatile, so the team will figure out how to get them both on the field. Jabril Cox and Damone Clark will compete for playing time.

The Cowboys upgraded their secondary in the trade for Gilmore. He isn't the same player he was when he won Defensive Player of the Year in 2019, but he can help a veteran team and could find a second wind playing opposite Trevon Diggs, who has become one of the top corners in the league the past two seasons. Jourdan Lewis and DaRon Bland add valuable depth at corner. The Cowboys return their safety trio of Donovan Wilson (who led the team with 101 tackles), Jayron Kearse and Malik Hooker.

SPECIALISTS

The Cowboys have a new long snapper in Trent Sieg and a new kicker to be determined. They signed Tristan Vizcaino, but like this time last year, their kicker may not be on their roster yet. They return punter Bryan Anger and returner KaVontae Turpin, who rank among the best at their positions. Anger made the Pro Bowl in 2021, and Turpin made the Pro Bowl in 2022 in his first NFL season.

FINAL ANALYSIS

The Cowboys at least need to show progress for McCarthy to return in 2024. They have the talent to contend. But will they? If they don't, Quinn or someone else likely will take over McCarthy's job in the offseason.

NATHAN RAY SEEBECK/USA TODAY SPORTS

2022 RESULTS (12-5)

Sept. 11	Tampa Bay	L	3-19
Sept. 18	Cincinnati	W	20-17
Sept. 26	at N.Y. Giants	W	23-16
Oct. 2	Washington	W	25-10
Oct. 9	at L.A. Rams	W	22-10
Oct. 16	at Philadelphia	L	17-26
Oct. 23	Detroit	W	24-6
Oct. 30	Chicago	W	49-29
Nov. 13	at Green Bay (ot)	L	28-31
Nov. 20	at Minnesota	W	40-3
Nov. 24	N.Y. Giants	W	28-20
Dec. 4	Indianapolis	W	54-19
Dec. 11	Houston	W	27-23
Dec. 18	at Jacksonville (ot)	L	34-40
Dec. 24	Philadelphia	W	40-34
Dec. 29	at Tennessee	W	27-13
Jan. 8	at Washington	L	6-26
Postseason			
Jan. 16	at Tampa Bay	W	31-14
Jan. 22	at San Francisco	L	12-19

2022 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	354.9	11	5
Rushing	135.2	9	6
Passing	219.8	14	7
Scoring	27.5	4	2
Third Down %	45.5	5	2
EPA/Play	0.031	10	5
TO Differential	+10	2	2

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	330.2	12	6
Rushing	129.3	22	9
Passing	200.9	8	5
Scoring	20.1	6	2
Interceptions	16	T7	T4
Sacks	54	T3	2
EPA/Play	-0.087	2	2

2022 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Dak Prescott	394	261	2,860	23	15
Cooper Rush	162	94	1,051	5	3

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Tony Pollard	193	1,007	5.2	9
Ezekiel Elliott	231	876	3.8	12
Dak Prescott	48	182	4.0	1

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
CeeDee Lamb	107	1,359	12.7	9
Dalton Schultz	57	577	10.1	5
Noah Brown	43	555	12.9	3
Michael Gallup	39	424	10.9	4

KICKING: Brett Maher, 29-32 FGs, 50-53 PAT, 137 points
TACKLES: Donovan Wilson, 101; Leighton Vander Esch, 90
SACKS: Micah Parsons, 13.5; Dorance Armstrong Jr., 8.5
INTERCEPTIONS: DaRon Bland, 5; Trevon Diggs, 3; Malik Hooker, 3

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

FATHER AND SON Cowboys scout Chris Vaughn was as surprised as his son, **Deuce**, when the team decided to draft the Kansas State running back. The Cowboys used a sixth-round choice on Deuce, who plays bigger than 5-foot-6. Deuce called it a tearjerker after the phone call from his father, the Cowboys' assistant director of college scouting. Everyone in the team's draft room gave the selection a standing ovation. The selection of Vaughn wasn't out of some obligation to his father, though. In his career at Kansas State, Deuce had 651 carries for 3,604 yards and 34 touchdowns with 116 receptions for 1,280 yards and nine touchdowns.

LIFE COMES AT YOU FAST The Cowboys selected Dak Prescott in the fourth round in 2016. Seven years later, Prescott is the NFL's longest-tenured quarterback with the same franchise. The trade of Aaron Rodgers from the Packers to the Jets and Derek Carr's departure from the Raiders for the Saints leaves Prescott as the last 2016 quarterback standing with his original team. Among the starting quarterbacks in 2016, the 49ers had Colin Kaepernick as their starter; the Vikings started Sam Bradford; Carson Palmer started for the Cardinals; and Carson Wentz and Jared Goff were rookie starters for the Eagles and Rams, respectively.

TRADE CHIP The Cowboys sent a fifth-round pick in 2023 and a sixth-round pick in 2024 to Houston for receiver Brandin Cooks. It marks the fourth time a team has traded Cooks. He went from the Saints to the Patriots, the Patriots to the Rams, the Rams to the Texans and now the Texans to the Cowboys. Counting the draft-day trade in 2014, Cooks has gone for two first-round picks, a second-rounder, two third-rounders, a fifth-rounder and two sixth-rounders.

FAREWELL TO ZEKE The Cowboys released running back Ezekiel Elliott this offseason, not offering him a reduced contract so as not to insult him, executive vice president Stephen Jones said. Elliott had career lows in carries (231), rushing yards (876), yards per attempt (3.8), touches (248) and yards from scrimmage (968) in 2022. He ranks third on the team's all-time rushing list.

SCOUTING THE COWBOYS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP DALLAS "Dak Prescott ultimately couldn't quite get it done again in the playoffs against the 49ers, making many wonder if he's the guy who can take the Cowboys all the way. What I question the most is his decision-making in key moments. At some point, you have to believe what you're seeing and trust that's just who he is: in the category of very good, not great. … Prescott's injury exposed vulnerabilities, not strengths. … The Cowboys' kicker situation post-Brett Maher's collapse is uncertain and not promising. They're hoping Tristan Vizcaino can stabilize the kicking game. We'll see. … A 12-5 record and NFC divisional round loss to the 49ers in 2022 showed potential, not the dominance Jerry Jones badly wants. … Trading for wide receiver Brandin Cooks was a solid move, giving them a dangerous deep threat to go with CeeDee Lamb. … Stephon Gilmore joining the secondary is a strong move. He still has some gas left in the tank. Between him and Trevon Diggs, it's hard to throw on these guys. … The Cowboys' offseason moves were calculated, not risky. … I'm not ruling out the Cowboys eventually putting it all together. Micah Parsons is a game-changer, a real cheat code, and the whole front seven is really good. I thought drafting Mazi Smith makes them stouter in the middle. I could see DeMarcus Lawrence having a big year."

ANDREW WEVERS/USA TODAY SPORTS

2023 COWBOYS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS.	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
15 Grier, Will	QB	6-1	215	4	West Virginia	W-Car-21	D3-Car-19
4 Prescott, Dak	QB	6-2	228	7	Mississippi State	D4b-16	D4b-Dal-16
10 Rush, Cooper	QB	6-3	224	5	Central Michigan	FA-20	FA-Dal-17

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
34 Davis, Malik	RB	5-10	205	1	Florida	FA-22	FA-Dal-22
23 Dowdle, Rico	RB	5-11	215	3	South Carolina	FA-20	FA-Dal-20
32 Jones II, Ronald	RB	5-11	205	5	USC	FA-KC-23	D2a-TB-18
20 Pollard, Tony	RB	6-0	212	4	Memphis	D4a-19	D4a-Dal-19

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
14 Callaway, Antonio	WR	5-11	200	4	Florida	FA-22	D4-Cle-18
3 Cooks, Brandin	WR	5-10	183	9	Oregon State	T-Hou-23	D1-NO-14
19 Drummond, Dontario	WR	6-1	212	1	Ole Miss	FA-22	FA-Dal-22
81 Fehoko, Simi	WR	6-4	218	2	Stanford	D5-21	D5-Dal-21
87 Ferguson, Jake	TE	6-5	252	1	Wisconsin	D4-22	D4-Dal-22
13 Gallup, Michael	WR	6-1	205	5	Colorado State	D3-18	D3-Dal-18
47 Green, Seth	TE	6-4	225	1	Houston	FA-23	FA-Hou-22
89 Hendershot, Peyton	TE	6-4	250	1	Indiana	FA-22	FA-Dal-22
17 Houston, Dennis	WR	6-2	202	1	Western Illinois	FA-22	FA-Dal-22
88 Lamb, CeeDee	WR	6-2	197	3	Oklahoma	D1-20	D1-Dal-20
84 McKeon, Sean	TE	6-5	255	3	Michigan	FA-20	FA-Dal-20
18 Tolbert, Jalen	WR	6-1	200	1	South Alabama	D3-22	D3-Dal-22
9 Turpin, KaVontae	WR	5-7	158	1	TCU	FA-22	FA-Dal-22

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
75 Ball, Josh	T	6-8	320	2	Marshall	D4b-21	D4b-Dal-21
63 Biadasz, Tyler	C	6-4	316	3	Wisconsin	D4b-20	D4b-Dal-20
76 Collins, Aviante	T	6-4	307	3	TCU	FA-21	FA-Min-17
71 Edoga, Chuma	T	6-3	308	4	USC	FA-Atl-23	D3b-NYJ-19
68 Farniok, Matt	C	6-5	316	2	Nebraska	D7-21	D7-Dal-21
67 Hoffman, Brock	C	6-4	302	1	Virginia Tech	FA-22	FA-Cle-22
65 Lindstrom, Alec	C	6-3	300	1	Boston College	FA-22	FA-Dal-22
70 Martin, Zack	G	6-4	315	9	Notre Dame	D1-14	D1-Dal-14
73 Smith, Tyler	G/T	6-5	320	1	Tulsa	D1-22	D1-Dal-22
77 Smith, Tyron	T	6-5	307	12	USC	D1-11	D1-Dal-11
78 Steele, Terence	T	6-6	320	3	Texas Tech	FA-20	FA-Dal-20
69 Taylor, Alex	T	6-8	294	1	South Carolina St.	FA-22	FA-Cle-20
79 Waletzko, Matt	T	6-7	320	1	North Dakota	D5a-22	D5a-Dal-22

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
60 Alarcón, Isaac	DL	6-6	315	1	Monterrey Tech	FA-20	FA-Dal-20
92 Armstrong Jr., Dorance	DE	6-3	270	5	Kansas	D4a-18	D4a-Dal-18
98 Bohanna, Quinton	DT	6-4	330	2	Kentucky	D6a-21	D6a-Dal-21
56 Fowler Jr., Dante	DE	6-3	260	8	Florida	FA-Atl-22	D1-Jac-15
96 Gallimore, Neville	DT	6-2	315	3	Oklahoma	D3-20	D3-Dal-20
99 Golston, Chauncey	DE	6-5	285	2	Iowa	D3b-21	D3b-Dal-21
95 Hankins, Johnathan	DT	6-3	320	10	Ohio State	T-LV-22	D2-NYG-13
90 Lawrence, DeMarcus	DE	6-3	255	9	Boise State	D2-14	D2-Dal-14
97 Odighizuwa, Osa	DT	6-2	294	2	UCLA	D3a-21	D3a-Dal-21
54 Williams, Sam	DE	6-4	270	1	Ole Miss	D2-22	D2-Dal-22

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
33 Clark, Damone	LB	6-3	245	1	LSU	D5c-22	D5c-Dal-22
14 Cox, Jabril	LB	6-3	240	2	LSU	D4a-21	D4a-Dal-21
50 Harper, Devin	LB	6-0	240	1	Oklahoma State	D6-22	D6-Dal-22
59 McKinley, Takk	LB	6-2	250	6	UCLA	FA-23	D1-Atl-17
11 Parsons, Micah	LB	6-3	248	2	Penn State	D1-21	D1-Dal-21
55 Vander Esch, Leighton	LB	6-4	255	5	Boise State	D1-18	D1-Dal-18

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
36 Alexander, Mackensie	CB	5-10	192	7	Clemson	FA-22	D2-Min-16
41 Bell, Markquese	S	6-2	215	1	Florida A&M	FA-22	FA-Dal-22
26 Bland, DaRon	CB	6-0	200	1	Fresno State	D5b-22	D5b-Dal-22
31 Coyle, Tyler	S	6-0	210	1	Purdue	FA-21	FA-Dal-21
7 Diggs, Trevon	CB	6-1	204	3	Alabama	D2-20	D2-Dal-20
21 Gilmore, Stephon	CB	6-0	190	11	South Carolina	T-Ind-23	D1-Buf-12
29 Goodwin, C.J.	CB	6-3	195	7	California (Pa.)	PS-Cin-18	FA-Pit-14
28 Hooker, Malik	S	6-1	215	6	Ohio State	FA-21	D1-Ind-17
1 Joseph, Kelvin	CB	5-11	200	2	Kentucky	D2-21	D2-Dal-21
27 Kearse, Jayron	S	6-4	227	7	Clemson	FA-21	D7-Min-16
2 Lewis, Jourdan	CB	5-10	190	6	Michigan	D3-17	D3-Dal-17
24 Mukuamu, Israel	S	6-4	215	2	South Carolina	D6b-21	D6b-Dal-21
45 Redwine, Sheldrick	S	6-0	195	4	Miami (Fla.)	FA-23	D4-Cle-19
40 Thomas, Juanyeh	S	6-1	215	1	Georgia Tech	FA-22	FA-Dal-22
6 Wilson, Donovan	S	6-0	205	4	Texas A&M	D6-19	D6-Dal-19
25 Wright, Nahshon	CB	6-4	190	2	Oregon State	D3c-21	D3c-Dal-21

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
5 Anger, Bryan	P	6-3	214	11	California	FA-Hou-21	D3-Jac-12
47 Sieg, Trent	LS	6-3	240	5	Colorado State	FA-LV-23	FA-Bal-18
Vizcaino, Tristan	K	6-2	205	2	Washington	FA-23	FA-Cin-19

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	13	Michael Gallup	18	Jalen Tolbert
WR	88	CeeDee Lamb	81	Simi Fehoko
WR	3	Brandin Cooks	9	KaVontae Turpin
LT	73	Tyler Smith	77	Tyron Smith
LG	78	Terence Steele	71	Chuma Edoga
C	63	Tyler Biadasz	67	Brock Hoffman
RG	70	Zack Martin	68	Matt Farniok
RT	77	Tyron Smith	75	Josh Ball
TE	86	Luke Schoonmaker (R)	87	Jake Ferguson
QB	4	Dak Prescott	10	Cooper Rush
RB	20	Tony Pollard	34	Malik Davis

DEFENSE

DE	92	Dorance Armstrong Jr.	56	Dante Fowler Jr.
DT	95	Johnathan Hankins	97	Osa Odighizuwa
DT	58	Mazi Smith (R)	96	Neville Gallimore
DE	90	DeMarcus Lawrence	54	Sam Williams
SLB	11	Micah Parsons	59	Takk McKinley
MLB	55	Leighton Vander Esch	33	Damone Clark
WLB	35	DeMarvion Overshawn (R)	14	Jabril Cox
CB	7	Trevon Diggs	26	DaRon Bland
CB	21	Stephon Gilmore	2	Jourdan Lewis
SS	27	Jayron Kearse	28	Malik Hooker
FS	6	Donovan Wilson	28	Malik Hooker

SPECIALISTS

K		Tristan Vizcaino	KR	9	KaVontae Turpin
P	5	Bryan Anger	PR	9	KaVontae Turpin

40

Left tackle Tyler Smith had a productive rookie season, allowing 40 pressures in 17 starts, according to Pro Football Focus. To compare, Seattle's Charles Cross and New York's Evan Neal had 50 and 52 pressures, respectively.

COWBOYS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Mazi Smith	DT	6-3	337	Michigan
2.	Luke Schoonmaker	TE	6-5	250	Michigan
3.	DeMarvion Overshown	ILB	6-2	220	Texas
4.	Viliami Fehoko Jr.	DE	6-4	267	San José State
5.	Asim Richards	OT	6-4	307	North Carolina
6.	Eric Scott Jr.	CB	6-0	197	Southern Miss
6.	Deuce Vaughn	RB	5-6	176	Kansas State
7.	Jalen Brooks	WR	6-2	205	South Carolina

The Cowboys used their first-round choice on run-stopper Mazi Smith. Dallas had not drafted a defensive tackle in the first round since 1991. As good as the defense has been under Dan Quinn, they have visions of it being better with the big-bodied Smith clogging the middle. Luke Schoonmaker will compete with Jake Ferguson, who was in the 2022 draft class, to take over as the starting tight end with Dalton Schultz now in Houston. DeMarvion Overshawn fills a need at linebacker, where Leighton Vander Esch needs help. The team's final four picks, Asim Richards, Eric Scott Jr., Deuce Vaughn and Jalen Brooks, have a big opportunity to make a roster that lacks depth at their positions.

NY GIANTS

NFC EAST FORECAST 3

2023 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 10	Dallas	8:20
Sept. 17	at Arizona	4:05
Sept. 21	at San Francisco	8:15
Oct. 2	Seattle	8:15
Oct. 8	at Miami	1:00
Oct. 15	at Buffalo	8:20
Oct. 22	Washington	1:00
Oct. 29	N.Y. Jets	1:00
Nov. 5	at Las Vegas	4:25
Nov. 12	at Dallas	4:25
Nov. 19	at Washington	1:00
Nov. 26	New England	1:00
Dec. 3	BYE	
Dec. 11	Green Bay	8:15
Dec. 17	at New Orleans	1:00
Dec. 25	at Philadelphia	4:30
Dec. 31	L.A. Rams	1:00
Jan. 7	Philadelphia	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

THE COACHES

Head Coach: Brian Daboll
Record With Team: 9–7-1
Career Record: 9-7-1
Offensive Coordinator: Mike Kafka
Defensive Coordinator: Wink Martindale
Special Teams Coordinator: Thomas McGaughey
Quarterbacks: Shea Tierney
Running Backs: Jeff Nixon
Wide Receivers: Mike Groh
Tight Ends: Andy Bischoff
Offensive Line: Bobby Johnson
Defensive Line: Andre Patterson
Inside Linebackers: John Egorugwu
Outside Linebackers: Drew Wilkins
Defensive Backs: Jerome Henderson
Safeties: Michael Treier

When GM Joe Schoen and head coach Brian Daboll took over a lost Giants franchise last January, they seemed to know they had a long road of rebuilding ahead. It's why they refused to set any expectations or even talk about making the playoffs.

So imagine their surprise when they actually did.

They won't admit it publicly, but there was some shock in the organization last season when the Giants went 9-7-1 and not only reached the playoffs for the first time in six years but also won a playoff game for the first time in more than a decade. Along the way, they discovered that Daniel Jones was indeed their franchise quarterback and that they had already filled more holes in the roster than they thought they could in one year.

Of course, they know they still have a long way to go. Last year's run was built on a 7-2 start where they managed to pull out almost every tight game they were in — five of the Giants' first six wins were by six points or fewer. The 2-5-1 finish, and the beating they took in Philadelphia in the second round of the playoffs (38-7), made it seem like the whole thing was a mirage.

Still, they saw that they were closer to being a perennial contender than they thought they'd be in Year 2, and they did a lot of upgrading of the roster in the offseason. This time, the shock will be if they don't make the playoffs because they certainly expect that they will.

OFFENSE

The main reason the Giants' offense functioned at all last season was because of Jones. Their best play was when he was running the ball, and the threat of that created a lot of open space for running back Saquon Barkley to run through, too. And the fact that Jones threw for 3,205 yards with the NFL's worst receiving corps … well, that's why he earned that four-year, $160 million deal.

The good news for him is that the Giants focused most of their attention on upgrading his supporting cast. Barkley is back, of course — albeit unhappy to be on the franchise tag. And they bolstered that terrible receiver group by signing the promising young Parris Campbell, drafting the speedy Jalin Hyatt and trading for dynamic tight end Darren Waller.

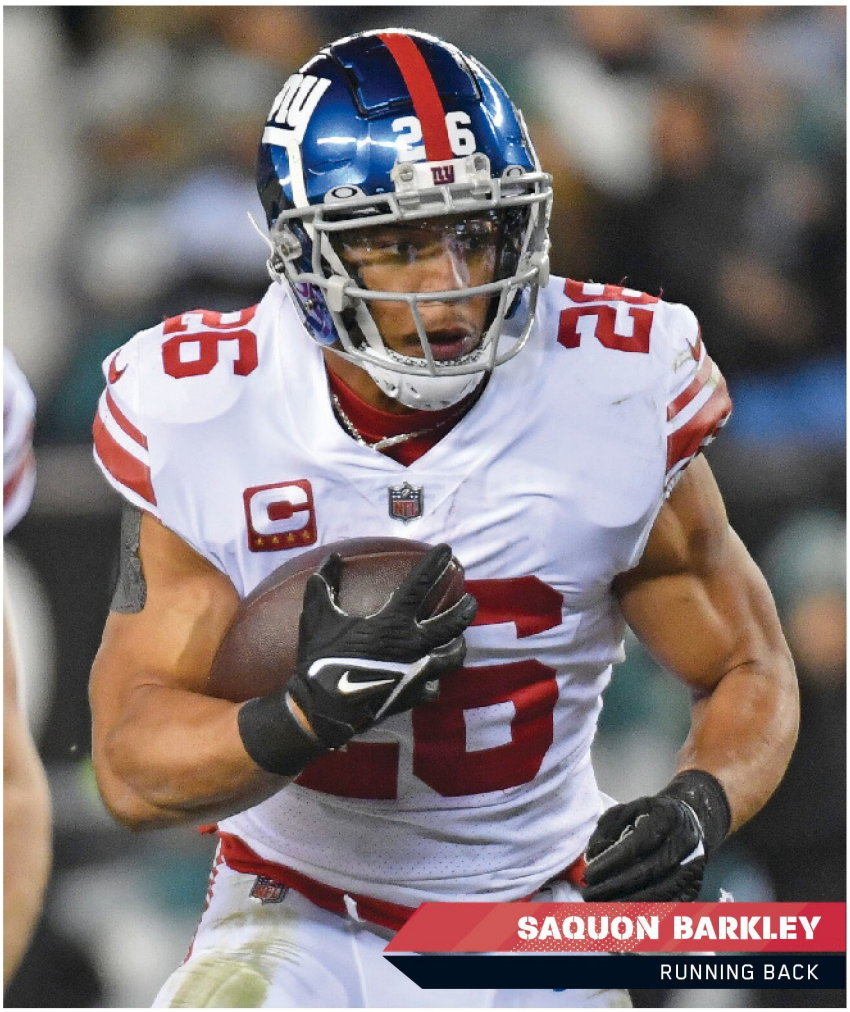
They also brought back Sterling Shepard and Wan'Dale Robinson, who are both coming off major injuries, and Darius Slayton, who was the best of the worst (46 catches, 724 yards) last season. But their hope is that Campbell, Hyatt and Waller eventually become a Big Three. Waller, in particular, has the potential for 90 catches and 1,100 yards, which he did with the Raiders the last two seasons he was healthy (2019-20).

If that passing game can actually work, the sky is the limit for a running game powered by Barkley and Jones and now with strong rookie center John Michael Schmitz Jr. anchoring an improving line. They have a chance to actually be somewhat capable this season.

The last time anyone said that about the Giants, Tom Coughlin and Eli Manning were still there.

DEFENSE

The best thing about the Giants last season was Wink Martindale's defense — particularly the way the unit was able to hold on to protect late leads in tight games early in the season. They were aggressive and opportunistic, and even



ERIC HARTLINE/USA TODAY SPORTS

they might admit they played a little bit over their heads. They might have to do it again, though, because they didn't upgrade a lot during the offseason. They did sign middle linebacker Bobby Okereke, who should be the leader of their defense. And first-round pick Deonte Banks should be an immediate starter at corner next to Adoree' Jackson.

But they did lose safety Julian Love, who was a defensive leader. He'll be replaced by free agent Bobby McCain, but they'll have to lean even more on Xavier McKinney to step up (and stay healthy).

Really, though, what Martindale's defense needs is more pressure from the front. Defensive tackle Dexter Lawrence II, who received a four-year, $90 million extension in May, is a monster and led the team with 7.5 sacks last season, and they got some depth at that spot by signing free agent Rakeem Nuñez-Roches.

Still, they really could use more push from the trio of Leonard Williams (2.5 sacks in 12 games), Kayvon Thibodeaux (4.0) and Azeez Ojulari (5.5 in seven games). A full season from Ojulari would be a big help in protecting a secondary that might still be the weak spot on this team.

SPECIALISTS

For a team that had to settle for field goals far too often, the Giants are lucky to have one of the best and most consistent kickers in the game in Graham Gano. He is just money. Last season, he connected on 90.6 percent of his field goals. He's missed a total of eight kicks in his three years with the Giants — and five of those were from 50 yards or longer.

They also have a talented punter in Jamie Gillan — a.k.a. "The Scottish Hammer" — that they like enough to have just given a two-year contract extension. He was erratic last season, though. He's got a strong leg but was far too inconsistent. And his nine touchbacks were a lot more than the Giants were hoping to see. His job is safe, however. This just is probably his last chance to prove he deserves to stick around for a while.

The Giants' return game will likely be a work in progress for a while. Running back Gary Brightwell returns as the primary kickoff guy, and his 21.3-yard average was fine, though he hardly ever seemed like a threat to break off a long one. They'll have to replace their primary punt returner, Richie James Jr. Corners Jackson and Darnay Holmes could get a shot. Veteran slot receiver Jamison Crowder could be a decent option, too, if he makes the final roster.

FINAL ANALYSIS

There is no doubt the Giants should be a better team this season, assuming they get their money's worth out of Jones and Barkley. They have filled nearly every hole on their team and upgraded their roster, especially on offense. They are a lot more talented than they were the year before.

But will they have a better record? That's harder to predict because a lot had to go right for them last season to get above .500. They probably won three or four games they shouldn't have, especially early in the season. For much of the second half, they didn't really look like a playoff team.

So unless they continue to get all the breaks, this might be a case of a much-improved team that doesn't improve much in its record. It seems much more likely they're going to hover around the .500 mark all season long. That won't be enough for them to keep pace with the Eagles and the Cowboys in the NFC East, but it should be enough to keep them on the fringes of the playoff race.

If they stay healthy, and they're still winning close games, they can make the expanded playoff field. They're talented enough to compete for one of those final wild-card spots.

2022 RESULTS (9-7-1)

Sept.	11	at Tennessee	W	21-20
Sept.	18	Carolina	W	19-16
Sept.	26	Dallas	L	16-23
Oct.	2	Chicago	W	20-12
Oct.	9	vs. Green Bay	W	27-22
Oct.	16	Baltimore	W	24-20
Oct.	23	at Jacksonville	W	23-17
Oct.	30	at Seattle	L	13-27
Nov.	13	Houston	W	24-16
Nov.	20	Detroit	L	18-31
Nov.	24	at Dallas	L	20-28
Dec.	4	Washington (ot)	T	20-20
Dec.	11	Philadelphia	L	22-48
Dec.	18	at Washington	W	20-12
Dec.	24	at Minnesota	L	24-27
Jan.	1	Indianapolis	W	38-10
Jan.	8	at Philadelphia	L	16-22
Postseason				
Jan.	15	at Minnesota	W	31-24
Jan.	21	at Philadelphia	L	7-38

2022 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	339.9	18	9
Rushing	148.2	4	3
Passing	185.7	26	12
Scoring	21.5	T15	T8
Third Down %	36.8	22	13
EPA/Play	0.034	9	4
TO Differential	+3	11	5

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	358.2	25	11
Rushing	144.2	27	13
Passing	214.0	14	8
Scoring	21.8	T17	T7
Interceptions	6	T31	16
Sacks	41	13	8
EPA/Play	0.046	28	13

2022 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Daniel Jones	472	317	3,205	15	5
Davis Webb	40	23	168	1	0

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Saquon Barkley	295	1,312	4.4	10
Daniel Jones	120	708	5.9	7
Matt Breida	54	220	4.1	1

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Richie James Jr.	57	569	10.0	4
Saquon Barkley	57	338	5.9	0
Darius Slayton	46	724	15.7	2
Isaiah Hodgins	33	351	10.6	4
Daniel Bellinger	30	268	8.9	2

KICKING: Graham Gano, 29-32 FGs, 32-34 PAT, 119 points
TACKLES: Julian Love, 124; Jaylon Smith, 88
SACKS: Dexter Lawrence, 7.5; Azeez Ojulari, 5.5
INTERCEPTIONS: Dane Belton, 2; Julian Love, 2

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

HONEYMOON'S OVER **Darren Waller** was still a tight end for the Las Vegas Raiders when he married Kelsey Plum of the WNBA's Las Vegas Aces. That was on March 4. Then the two went on their honeymoon. One day after they returned, ready to resume their life together in Vegas, Waller was traded to the New York Giants. "It was a bit of a curveball," he admits. "I'm grateful to have somebody that understands how things work in an industry like this. We just go forward and make the best of it."

THE ENFORCER The Giants got a lot of criticism for the massive, four-year, $160 million contract they gave QB Daniel Jones. But WR Darius Slayton, who got a more modest two-year, $12 million deal to return to the team, has his quarterback's back. "Anybody who follows me on Twitter knows Daniel Jones slander is not being tolerated," he says. "That'll be that way probably until the day I die."

LOL DABS The Giants traded up 16 spots in the third round to take WR Jalin Hyatt, but that aggressive move wasn't all GM Joe Schoen's doing. The groundwork was laid by coach Brian Daboll. "He initiated the trade with the Rams," Schoen says, by texting one of his contacts there. Although he didn't do it all by himself. "We had to type it in his phone for him," Schoen said. "He said, 'Here, just type it in for me.'"

THE STREAK CONTINUES It is now 39 straight drafts and counting for the Giants without taking a linebacker in the first round. The last time they did was 1984 when they drafted Carl Banks third overall.

SCOUTING THE GIANTS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP NEW YORK "Daniel Jones proved something to me last season. He deserved that big deal. He has shown his true potential since Joe Judge was fired. Brian Daboll has a really good feel for the quarterback position, and Mike Kafka deserves a lot of credit, too, for Jones' development. I've got no problem with the deal [four years, $160 million, $82 million guaranteed]. I'm expecting more production from Jones this year, a lot more. … As a leader and strategist, Daboll was a significant upgrade at head coach. It had been a while since the Giants had been that relevant. They hadn't been to the playoffs in six years. … I think the next big deal they should do is for left tackle Andrew Thomas. His upside is tremendous. … Drafting John Michael Schmitz Jr. was a smart move. They really needed a good center to plug in there. … I get why they pulled the offer for Saquon Barkley off the table. You have to be so careful when you're investing in the running back position. … Trading for Darren Waller is something of a gamble, but if he can stay healthy, there's something there and could make Jones' job a lot easier. … Evan Neal was underwhelming as a rookie. … Jalin Hyatt doesn't have great route-running diversity, but, man, is he fast. … Dexter Lawrence II has seriously outplayed his contract. This defensive line is shaping up nicely. … Bobby Okereke's speed and instincts will make a difference. … They really, really needed a corner, and Deonte Banks has all the traits it takes to be good right away."

STEPHEN R. SYLVANIE/USA TODAY SPORTS

2023 GIANTS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS.	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
8 Jones, Daniel	QB	6-5	230	4	Duke	D1-19	D1-NYG-19
2 Taylor, Tyrod	QB	6-1	217	12	Virginia Tech	FA-Hou-22	D6-Bal-11
RUNNING BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
26 Barkley, Saquon	RB	6-0	232	5	Penn State	D1-18	D1-NYG-18
31 Breida, Matt	RB	5-10	195	6	Georgia Southern	FA-Buf-22	FA-SF-17
23 Brightwell, Gary	RB	6-1	218	2	Arizona	D6-21	D6-NYG-21
25 Corbin, Jashaun	RB	6-0	221	1	Florida State	FA-22	FA-NYG-22
RECEIVERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
82 Bellinger, Daniel	TE	6-6	255	1	San Diego State	D4-22	D4-NYG-22
83 Cager, Lawrence	TE	6-5	220	2	Georgia	FA-22	FA-NYJ-20
0 Campbell, Parris	WR	6-1	208	4	Ohio State	FA-Ind-23	D2-Ind-19
80 Crowder, Jamison	WR	5-9	177	8	Duke	FA-Buf-23	D4a-Was-15
18 Hodgins, Isaiah	WR	6-3	201	2	Oregon State	W-Buf-22	D6b-Buf-20
15 Johnson, Collin	WR	6-6	220	3	Texas	W-Jac-21	D5b-Jac-20
88 Mickens, Jaydon	WR	5-11	170	7	Washington	FA-22	FA-LV-16
45 Miller, Dre	TE	6-2	215	1	Maine	FA-22	FA-NYG-22
85 Myarick, Chris	TE	6-5	261	3	Temple	FA-22	FA-Mia-19
81 Pimpleton, Kalil	WR	5-9	175	1	Central Michigan	FA-22	FA-Det-22
87 Polk, Makai	WR	6-3	197	1	Mississippi State	FA-22	FA-Bal-22
17 Robinson, Wan'Dale	WR	5-8	185	1	Kentucky	D2-22	D2-NYG-22
3 Shepard, Sterling	WR	5-10	196	7	Oklahoma	D2-16	D2-NYG-16
13 Sills V, David	WR	6-3	211	2	West Virginia	FA-19	FA-Buf-19
86 Slayton, Darius	WR	6-1	194	4	Auburn	D5-19	D5-NYG-19
19 Smith, Jeff	WR	6-1	195	3	Boston College	FA-NYJ-23	FA-NYJ-19
89 Sweeney, Tommy	TE	6-5	251	3	Boston College	FA-23	D7-Buf-19
12 Waller, Darren	TE	6-6	238	6	Georgia Tech	T-LV-23	D6-Bal-15
OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
77 Anderson, Jack	G	6-4	314	2	Texas Tech	W-Phi-22	D7-Buf-21
68 Bredeson, Ben	G	6-5	315	3	Michigan	T-Bal-21	D4-Bal-20
70 Cunningham, Korey	T	6-6	311	5	Cincinnati	FA-22	D7-Ari-18
67 Davis, Wyatt	G	6-4	315	2	Ohio State	W-Ari-22	D3-Min-21
75 Ezeudu, Joshua	OL	6-4	320	1	North Carolina	D3-22	D3-NYG-22
64 Glowinski, Mark	G	6-4	310	8	West Virginia	FA-Ind-22	D4-Sea-15
62 Hamilton, Devery	OL	6-6	311	1	Duke	FA-22	FA-LV-21
63 Hassenauer, J.C.	C	6-2	295	3	Alabama	FA-Pit-23	FA-Atl-18
72 Kindley, Solomon	G	6-4	335	3	Georgia	FA-22	D4-Mia-20
66 Lemieux, Shane	G	6-4	310	3	Oregon	D5-20	D5-NYG-20
60 McKethan, Marcus	OL	6-6	335	1	North Carolina	D5-22	D5-NYG-22
73 Neal, Evan	T	6-7	350	1	Alabama	D1-22	D1-NYG-22
74 Peart, Matt	T	6-7	318	3	Connecticut	D3-20	D3-NYG-20
79 Phillips, Tyre	G	6-5	344	3	Mississippi State	W-Bal-22	D3d-Bal-20
78 Thomas, Andrew	T	6-5	315	3	Georgia	D1-20	D1-NYG-20
DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
90 Anderson, Ryder	DL	6-6	276	1	Indiana	FA-22	FA-NYG-22
91 Butler, Vernon	DL	6-4	325	6	Louisiana Tech	FA-22	D1-Car-16
98 Davidson, D.J.	DL	6-5	325	1	Arizona State	D5-22	D5-NYG-22
97 Lawrence II, Dexter	DL	6-4	342	4	Clemson	D1-19	D1-NYG-19
93 Nuñez-Roches, Rakeem	DL	6-2	307	8	Southern Miss	FA-TB-23	D6-KC-15
54 Robinson, A'Shawn	DT	6-4	330	7	Alabama	FA-LAR-23	D2-Det-16
99 Williams, Leonard	DL	6-5	302	8	USC	T-NYJ-19	D1-NYJ-15
LINEBACKERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
41 Beavers, Darrian	ILB	6-4	255	1	Cincinnati	D6-22	D6-NYG-22
47 Brown, Cam	ILB	6-5	233	3	Penn State	D6-20	D6-NYG-20
52 Coughlin, Carter	ILB	6-3	236	3	Minnesota	D7-20	D7-NYG-20
57 Davis, Jarrad	ILB	6-1	245	6	Florida	FA-22	D1-Det-17
49 Fox, Tomon	OLB	6-2	253	1	North Carolina	FA-22	FA-NYG-22
41 McFadden, Micah	ILB	6-2	232	1	Indiana	D5-22	D5-NYG-22
51 Ojulari, Azeez	OLB	6-3	240	2	Georgia	D2-21	D2-NYG-21
58 Okereke, Bobby	LB	6-2	235	4	Stanford	FA-Ind-23	D3-Ind-19
95 Roche, Quincy	OLB	6-3	245	2	Miami (Fla.)	W-Pit-21	D6-Pit-21
94 Smith, Elerson	OLB	6-6	245	2	Northern Iowa	D4-21	D4-NYG-21
5 Thibodeaux, Kayvon	OLB	6-5	258	1	Oregon	D1-22	D1-NYG-22
55 Ward, Jihad	OLB	6-5	287	7	Illinois	FA-Jac-22	D2-LV-16
53 Ximines, Oshane	OLB	6-4	254	4	Old Dominion	D3-19	D3-NYG-19
DEFENSIVE BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
24 Belton, Dane	S	6-1	190	1	Iowa	D4-22	D4-NYG-22
34 Burgess, Terrell	S	5-11	202	3	Utah	FA-22	D3-LAR-20
28 Flott, Cor'Dale	CB	6-2	175	1	LSU	D3-22	D3-NYG-22
38 Gilbert, Zyon	CB	6-0	193	1	Florida Atlantic	FA-22	FA-NYG-22
30 Holmes, Darnay	CB	5-10	195	3	UCLA	D4-20	D4-NYG-20
22 Jackson, Adoree'	CB	5-11	185	6	USC	FA-Ten-21	D1b-Ten-17
21 McCain, Bobby	S	5-11	192	8	Memphis	FA-Was-23	D5-Mia-15
44 McCloud, Nick	CB	6-0	193	1	Notre Dame	W-Buf-22	FA-Buf-21
29 McKinney, Xavier	S	6-0	201	3	Alabama	D2-20	D2-NYG-20
20 Oruwariye, Amani	CB	6-2	202	4	Penn State	FA-Det-23	D5-Det-19
27 Pinnock, Jason	S	6-0	200	2	Pittsburgh	W-NYJ-22	D5c-NYJ-21
33 Robinson, Aaron	CB	6-1	193	2	UCF	D3-21	D3-NYG-21
39 Thompson, Trenton	S	6-1	196	1	San Diego State	FA-22	FA-NYG-22
25 Williams, Rodarius	CB	6-0	195	2	Oklahoma State	D6-21	D6-NYG-21
SPECIALISTS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
9 Gano, Graham	K	6-2	202	13	Florida State	FA-20	FA-Bal-09
6 Gillan, Jamie	P	6-1	207	4	Arkansas-Pine Bluff	FA-22	FA-Cle-19
58 Kreiter, Casey	LS	6-1	250	7	Iowa	FA-Den-20	FA-Dal-14

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	0	Parris Campbell	17	Wan'Dale Robinson
WR	86	Darius Slayton	18	Isaiah Hodgins
WR	84	Jalin Hyatt (R)	3	Sterling Shepard
LT	78	Andrew Thomas	70	Korey Cunningham
LG	75	Joshua Ezeudu	66	Shane Lemieux
C	61	John Michael Schmitz Jr. (R)	68	Ben Bredeson
RG	64	Mark Glowinski	77	Jack Anderson
RT	73	Evan Neal	79	Tyre Phillips
TE	12	Darren Waller	82	Daniel Bellinger
QB	8	Daniel Jones	2	Tyrod Taylor
RB	26	Saquon Barkley	31	Matt Breida

DEFENSE

DE	99	Leonard Williams	90	Ryder Anderson
NT	97	Dexter Lawrence II	98	D.J. Davidson
DT	91	A'Shawn Robinson	93	Rakeem Nuñez-Roches
OLB	51	Azeez Ojulari	55	Jihad Ward
ILB	58	Bobby Okereke	41	Micah McFadden
ILB	57	Jarrad Davis	47	Cam Brown
OLB	5	Kayvon Thibodeaux	94	Elerson Smith
CB	22	Adoree' Jackson	30	Darnay Holmes
CB	36	Deonte Banks (R)	28	Cor'Dale Flott
S	29	Xavier McKinney	27	Jason Pinnock
S	21	Bobby McCain	24	Dane Belton

SPECIALISTS

K	9	Graham Gano	KR	23	Gary Brightwell
P	6	Jamie Gillan	PR	30	Darnay Holmes

3,327

Daniel Jones and the Giants recorded 3,327 intended air yards on all pass attempts, whether complete or incomplete, ranking 31st in the league, ahead of only the Panthers.

GIANTS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: A-

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Deonte Banks	CB	6-2	205	Maryland
2.	John Michael Schmitz Jr.	C	6-4	310	Minnesota
3.	Jalin Hyatt	WR	6-0	185	Tennessee
5.	Eric Gray	RB	5-10	210	Oklahoma
6.	Tre Hawkins III	CB	6-3	195	Old Dominion
7.	Jordon Riley	DT	6-5	325	Oregon
7.	Gervarrius Owens	S	6-0	200	Houston

The Giants got three starters, impact players and potential first-rounders in their first three picks, which is quite a haul. Deonte Banks is a perfect fit for the Wink Martindale defense, with good length and excellent press skills. John Michael Schmitz Jr. was the top center on their board and fills a huge hole in the middle of their line. And Jalin Hyatt has 4.35 speed and can be the kind of downfield playmaker they haven't had in years. Getting a center and another weapon for Daniel Jones was crucial in this draft. Hyatt in particular could change everything about an offense that was built all around the running game last season.

PHI EAGLES

NFC EAST FORECAST **1**

Eagles fans may still be grousing about the defensive holding call on James Bradberry in Super Bowl LVII's waning moments that they thought was a crime against football and the city, but their favorite team has moved forward after last season's thrilling ride with plenty of returning cast members and enough new faces to make things interesting.

The biggest news heading into 2023 is that the Birds have locked up QB Jalen Hurts for five years and $255 million, with $179.3 million guaranteed. After just two years as a full-time starter, Hurts became the highest-paid player in the NFL for a couple of days and has established himself as the face of the franchise. All he has to do now is help the Eagles take the step they couldn't in last year's Super loss to Kansas City.

He'll do it with another strong offensive line and some top-flight receivers. But he'll also have to adjust to a new offensive coordinator, after Indianapolis hired Shane Steichen as its head coach. Philadelphia's former DC, Jonathan Gannon, is now in charge of the Cardinals. The Eagles still are formidable and most definitely Super Bowl contenders, but things have changed some, and newcomers have to step up on the coaching staff and on the field.

OFFENSE

Last year, Hurts accounted for 35 touchdowns, including 13 on the ground. He proved to be the perfect triggerman for the Eagles' RPO-heavy attack, and his ability to make quick decisions and deliver the ball without much delay helps make the Eagles extremely difficult to defend. His work in the pocket improved last year, as his 66.5 percent completion rate (up from 61.3 in 2021) showed. He should be even more accurate this year. Marcus Mariota, whom fans wanted the Birds to draft in 2015, will back up Hurts. He's mobile and fairly accurate but throws too many interceptions.

A big reason for Hurts' success is the dynamic receiving tandem of DeVonta Smith (95 receptions, seven TDs, 12.6-yard average) and A.J. Brown (88, 11, 17.0). Each has the ability to get deep while still operating successfully underneath. The question is whether there will be much depth outside. Last year, Quez Watkins was extremely inconsistent and sometimes a flat-out liability in the slot. Head coach Nick Sirianni has expressed confidence in him, but he has to become more reliable. Free-agent signee Olamide Zaccheaus will provide needed depth and could start ahead of Watkins. Tight end Dallas Goedert has emerged as a top tight end in the league. He is able to get downfield and is an improved blocker.

Once again, the line will be an undeniable strength, even though starting guard Isaac Seumalo moved on to Pittsburgh. Future Hall of Fame center Jason Kelce is returning for a 13th season; he's an unparalleled leader and a powerhouse in the middle. Tackles Lane Johnson and Jordan Mailata form possibly the best tandem in the NFL. Landon Dickerson reliable at left guard, while Cam Jurgens, the center-in-waiting, will move into Seumalo's spot.

That line will be blocking for a new lead back, since Miles Sanders has moved on to Carolina. The Eagles could use a committee that includes former Lion D'Andre Swift, a Philadelphia native who is productive and fast but struggled with injuries during his three years in Detroit; free-agent pickup Rashaad Penny, who is stout when healthy; Kenneth Gainwell, a versatile runner and pass catcher; and steady Boston Scott.

2023 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 10	at New England	4:25
Sept. 14	Minnesota	8:15
Sept. 25	at Tampa Bay	7:15
Oct. 1	Washington	1:00
Oct. 8	at L.A. Rams	4:05
Oct. 15	at N.Y. Jets	4:25
Oct. 22	Miami	8:20
Oct. 29	at Washington	1:00
Nov. 5	Dallas	4:25
Nov. 12	BYE	
Nov. 20	at Kansas City	8:15
Nov. 26	Buffalo	4:25
Dec. 3	San Francisco	4:25
Dec. 10	at Dallas	8:20
Dec. 17	at Seattle	4:25
Dec. 25	N.Y. Giants	4:30
Dec. 31	Arizona	1:00
Jan. 7	at N.Y. Giants	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

THE COACHES

Head Coach: Nick Sirianni
Record With Team: 23-11
Career Record: 23-11
Offensive Coordinator: Brian Johnson
Defensive Coordinator: Sean Desai
Special Teams Coordinator: Michael Clay
Passing Game Coordinator/Assoc. Head Coach: Kevin Patullo
Quarterbacks: Alex Tanney
Assistant Head Coach/Running Backs: Jemal Singleton
Wide Receivers: Aaron Moorehead
Tight Ends: Jason Michael
Offensive Line/Run Game Coordinator: Jeff Stoutland
Defensive Line: Tracy Rocker
Defensive Ends/Outside Linebackers: Jeremiah Washburn
Linebackers: D.J. Eliot
Defensive Backs: D.K. McDonald

DEFENSE

Although plenty of familiar faces return on this side of the ball, the Eagles need some newcomers to provide immediate help, particularly in the defensive backfield. And new DC Sean Desai must find a way to prevent the success some opponents had last year, particularly Kansas City in the second half of the Super Bowl.

Both starting cornerbacks, Darius Slay and Bradberry, return, giving the Birds a veteran presence on the outside. Both had three interceptions last year and are upper-echelon cover guys. Avonte Maddox returns as the primary slot corner, and Zech McPhearson, Josh Jobe and newcomer Greedy Williams will provide backup. Rookie Kelee Ringo should provide depth. The loss of safety C.J. Gardner-Johnson (six interceptions) was big. The Eagles also watched Marcus Epps leave in free agency. Former Steeler Terrell Edmunds will take Gardner-Johnson's spot. He is strong against the run and has good coverage skills. Expect Reed Blankenship and K'Von Wallace to fight it out for the other spot, with third-rounder Sydney Brown likely to get a long look.

JALEN HURTS
QUARTERBACK

MICHAEL CHOW/THE REPUBLIC

Up front, the Eagles brought back tackle Fletcher Cox and end Brandon Graham, each of whom had strong years in '22, but both are nearing the ends of their careers. End Josh Sweat, who like Graham had 11 sacks, is a dangerous pass rusher. The Birds made big news by drafting Jalen Carter from Georgia, a huge talent with off-field questions. He has massive potential. The rest of the interior rotation will include Milton Williams, second-year man Jordan Davis and former Saint Kentavius Street, who had his best season in '22.

The Eagles signed Haason Reddick last offseason, and he posted a career-high 16 sacks from the outside linebacker position. He's a terror off the edge. Second-year man Nakobe Dean will get a chance to contribute more inside, as will Nicholas Morrow, who posted 116 tackles last year with the Bears. Nolan Smith, a first-rounder from Georgia, has great speed off the edge and reminds some of Reddick.

SPECIALISTS

Jake Elliott had another excellent year handling the placekicking, converting 20-of-23 attempts, including 5-of-6 from 50 or longer. He has a strong, reliable leg. The punting situation isn't as strong. Arryn Siposs averaged 45.6 yards per punt last year but missed four games with an injury, and his shanked kick in the Super Bowl helped set up an easy Kansas City touchdown. Wideout Britain Covey is an effective and fearless punt returner, and Scott is reliable on kickoff returns.

FINAL ANALYSIS

There are those who downplayed the Eagles' run to the Super Bowl last year because they faced a vulnerable Giants team and knocked out 49ers QB Brock Purdy early in the NFC title game, but that was a very good team. This squad has plenty of potential, too.

Hurts should trigger another highly potent offense. Now that he's in his third full year as a starter, he should be even more comfortable reading defenses and making quick, accurate decisions. He's a dangerous runner — although that got him hurt last year — and his arm is plenty strong for the NFL. Having Brown and Smith to throw to makes his job even easier.

It's important that Penny and Swift stay healthy because Gainwell hasn't yet proven himself to be a full-time lead runner. Working behind the top-notch O-line will make all the backs' lives easier.

The Eagles staggered in the second half against the Chiefs and were vulnerable at times last year as Gannon chose to protect against the big play. Expect Desai to be somewhat less conservative, although with the pass-rushing and outside coverage talent on the roster, he won't have to take many chances. If the linebackers can be steady, this should be a good unit.

The NFC East should be even more dangerous this year, with the Giants continuing to mature, the Cowboys still dangerous and the Commanders expected to be improved. But the Eagles have plenty of talent and experience and should be serious Super Bowl contenders again.

2022 RESULTS (14-3)

Sept.	11	at Detroit	W	38-35
Sept.	19	Minnesota	W	24-7
Sept.	25	at Washington	W	24-8
Oct.	2	Jacksonville	W	29-21
Oct.	9	at Arizona	W	20-17
Oct.	16	Dallas	W	26-17
Oct.	30	Pittsburgh	W	35-13
Nov.	3	at Houston	W	29-17
Nov.	14	Washington	L	21-32
Nov.	20	at Indianapolis	W	17-16
Nov.	27	Green Bay	W	40-33
Dec.	4	Tennessee	W	35-10
Dec.	11	at N.Y. Giants	W	48-22
Dec.	18	at Chicago	W	25-20
Dec.	24	at Dallas	L	34-40
Jan.	1	New Orleans	L	10-20
Jan.	8	N.Y. Giants	W	22-16
Postseason				
Jan.	21	N.Y. Giants	W	38-7
Jan.	29	San Francisco	W	31-7
Feb.	12	vs. Kansas City	L	35-38

2022 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	389.1	3	1
Rushing	147.6	5	4
Passing	241.5	9	5
Scoring	28.1	3	1
Third Down %	45.9	4	1
EPA/Play	0.100	3	1
TO Differential	+8	3	3

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	301.5	2	2
Rushing	121.6	T16	6
Passing	179.8	1	1
Scoring	20.2	7	3
Interceptions	17	T4	T2
Sacks	70	1	1
EPA/Play	-0.063	4	3

2022 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Jalen Hurts	460	306	3,701	22	6
Gardner Minshew	76	44	663	3	3

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Miles Sanders	259	1,269	4.9	11
Jalen Hurts	165	760	4.6	13
Kenneth Gainwell	53	240	4.5	4
Boston Scott	54	217	4.0	3

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
DeVonta Smith	95	1,196	12.6	7
A.J. Brown	88	1,496	17.0	11
Dallas Goedert	55	702	12.8	3
Quez Watkins	33	354	10.7	3

KICKING: Jake Elliott, 20-23 FGs, 51-53 PAT, 111 points
TACKLES: T.J. Edwards, 159; Kyzir White, 110
SACKS: Haason Reddick, 16.0; three tied with 11.0
INTERCEPTIONS: C.J. Gardner-Johnson, 6; James Bradberry, 3; Darius Slay, 3

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

KELLY'S HEROES Eagles fans are excited that the team will wear Kelly green uniforms and helmets as part of an alternate uniform this season. The Birds wore the popular ensembles during the 1980s and '90s, but they had to wait until the league gave permission for the helmet color before they could bring back the uniforms.

CHRISTMAS SPIRIT "A Philly Special Christmas," a holiday album recorded by Eagles linemen **Jason Kelce**, Lane Johnson and Jordan Mailata with former Eagle Connor Barwin and others, raised more than $1.25 million for Philadelphia-area charities, including the Children's Crisis Treatment Center. The album also hit No. 1 on Billboard's Top Album Compilation chart. A video on the making of the album, which was produced by Charlie Hall, drummer for The War on Drugs, accompanied the musical release.

CENTER OF ATTENTION Last offseason, Eagles head coach Nick Sirianni sent a keg of beer to Kelce in an attempt to convince him to return for the 2022 season. It worked. This year, Sirianni needed no such inducement to recruit Kelce to return. In mid-March, Kelce tweeted that he would be back for a 13th campaign with the Eagles. In typical Kelce fashion, he ended the tweet with "I ain't f—ing done yet!"

FINALLY The Eagles' decision to add Marcus Mariota as their backup quarterback during free agency brings closure to a surreal saga that began way back in 2015, when fans were clamoring for the franchise to trade up to draft the Oregon Heisman Trophy winner. ESPN's Sal Paolantonio even got into the act, saying "Make the deal!" on a local radio station; that phrase became a rallying cry for the fans leading up to the draft. Instead of moving up, though, the Birds picked USC receiver Nelson Agholor with the 20th pick, 18 spots after Tennessee chose Mariota.

SCOUTING THE EAGLES

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP PHILADELPHIA "Jalen Hurts earned a blockbuster five-year, $255 million contract after taking the team to the Super Bowl and just falling short against the Chiefs. The guy cashed in big time after a stellar 2022 season, achieving a commanding 14-3 regular season record. As a dual-threat quarterback, he's the prototype and plays the game with a lot of instincts and intelligence. Hurts' new contract was well-deserved, not an overreach. … Howie Roseman is creating a Georgia Bulldogs pipeline. They've drafted Jordan Davis, Nakobe Dean, Jalen Carter, Nolan Smith and Kelee Ringo in just the past two drafts. The Eagles' strategy of drafting Bulldogs players is intentional and smart. … Stockpiling running backs, they've signed Rashaad Penny from the Seahawks and traded for the Lions' D'Andre Swift. The additions of Penny and Swift to the backfield is strategic, not excessive. That fits how they want to play after losing [offensive coordinator] Shane Steichen to the Colts. … We had Jalen Carter off our draft board. The young man's nonchalance about football as far as practice habits and some off-field things in addition to the tragic accident really gave us pause. … The NFC East's competitiveness is heating up, not plateauing. … Roseman's aggressiveness really stands out to me. It's enviable, and it shows the Eagles aren't complacent about anything."

MARK J. REBILAS/USA TODAY SPORTS

2023 EAGLES VETERAN ROSTER

	QUARTERBACKS	POS.	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
19	Book, Ian	QB	6-0	206	2	Notre Dame	W-NO-22	D4-NO-21
1	Hurts, Jalen	QB	6-1	223	3	Oklahoma	D2-20	D2-Phi-20
8	Mariota, Marcus	QB	6-4	223	8	Oregon	FA-Atl-23	D1-Ten-15
	RUNNING BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
34	Brooks, Kennedy	RB	5-11	213	1	Oklahoma	FA-23	FA-Phi-22
14	Gainwell, Kenneth	RB	5-9	200	2	Memphis	D5-21	D5-Phi-21
23	Penny, Rashaad	RB	5-11	230	5	San Diego State	FA-Sea-23	D1-Sea-18
35	Scott, Boston	RB	5-6	203	4	Louisiana Tech	PS-NO-18	D6-NO-18
0	Swift, D'Andre	RB	5-9	208	3	Georgia	T-Det-23	D2-Det-20
34	Sermon, Trey	RB	6-0	215	2	Ohio State	W-SF-22	D3a-SF-21
	RECEIVERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
82	Allen, Devon	WR	6-1	190	1	Oregon	FA-22	FA-Phi-22
	Arnold, Dan	TE	6-6	240	5	Wisc.-Platteville	FA-Jac-23	FA-NO-17
11	Brown, A.J.	WR	6-1	226	4	Ole Miss	T-Ten-22	D2-Ten-19
81	Calcaterra, Grant	TE	6-4	240	1	SMU	D6b-22	D6b-Phi-22
85	Cleveland, Tyrie	WR	6-2	205	3	Florida	FA-22	D7-Den-20
18	Covey, Britain	WR	5-8	173	1	Utah	FA-22	FA-Phi-22
88	Goedert, Dallas	TE	6-5	256	5	South Dakota St.	D2-18	D2-Phi-18
80	Jackson, Tyree	TE	6-7	249	2	Buffalo	FA-21	FA-Buf-19
47	Keene, Dalton	TE	6-4	251	2	Virginia Tech	FA-23	D3-NE-20
6	Smith, DeVonta	WR	6-0	170	2	Alabama	D1-21	D1-Phi-21
89	Stoll, Jack	TE	6-4	247	2	Nebraska	FA-21	FA-Phi-21
84	Ward, Greg	WR	5-11	190	4	Houston	FA-19	FA-Phi-17
16	Watkins, Quez	WR	6-0	193	3	Southern Miss	D6b-20	D6b-Phi-20
13	Zaccheaus, Olamide	WR	5-8	194	4	Virginia	FA-Atl-23	FA-Atl-19
	OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
69	Dickerson, Landon	G	6-6	332	2	Alabama	D2-21	D2-Phi-21
63	Driscoll, Jack	T/G	6-5	312	3	Auburn	D4b-20	D4b-Phi-20
77	Good-Jones, Julian	G	6-5	313	1	Iowa State	FA-23	FA-Phi-20
50	Johnson, Fred	T	6-7	326	4	Florida	FA-22	FA-Pit-19
65	Johnson, Lane	T	6-6	325	10	Oklahoma	D1-13	D1-Phi-13
66	Johnson, Roderick	T	6-7	301	5	Florida State	FA-22	D5-Cle-17
51	Jurgens, Cam	C/G	6-3	303	1	Nebraska	D2-22	D2-Phi-22
62	Kelce, Jason	C	6-3	295	12	Cincinnati	D6a-11	D6a-Phi-11
68	Mailata, Jordan	T	6-8	365	5	None	D7-18	D7-Phi-18
78	Opeta, Sua	G	6-4	305	3	Weber State	FA-19	FA-Phi-19
76	Robinson, Tyrese	G	6-3	317	1	Oklahoma	FA-22	FA-Was-22
61	Sills, Josh	G	6-6	325	1	Oklahoma State	FA-22	FA-Phi-22
67	Tom, Cameron	C	6-4	300	5	Southern Miss	FA-22	FA-NO-17
64	Toth, Brett	T/G	6-6	304	4	Army	FA-23	FA-Phi-19
73	Williams, Jarrid	T	6-6	325	1	Miami (Fla.)	FA-23	FA-Phi-22
	DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
96	Barnett, Derek	DE	6-3	259	6	Tennessee	D1-17	D1-Phi-17
91	Cox, Fletcher	DT	6-4	310	11	Mississippi State	D1-12	D1-Phi-12
90	Davis, Jordan	DT	6-6	336	1	Georgia	D1-22	D1-Phi-22
61	Elliss, Noah	DT	6-4	346	1	Idaho	FA-22	FA-Phi-22
55	Graham, Brandon	DE	6-2	265	13	Michigan	D1-10	D1-Phi-10
75	Jackson, Tarron	DE	6-2	254	2	Coastal Carolina	D6b-21	D6b-Phi-21
66	Leo, Matt	DE	6-7	280	1	Iowa State	FA-20	FA-Phi-20
59	Robinson, Janarius	DE	6-5	258	2	Florida State	PS-Min-22	D4c-Min-21
97	Street, Kentavius	DT	6-2	287	4	NC State	FA-NO-23	D4-SF-18
94	Sweat, Josh	DE	6-5	265	5	Florida State	D4b-18	D4b-Phi-18
95	Tuipulotu, Marlon	DT	6-2	307	2	USC	D6a-21	D6a-Phi-21
93	Williams, Milton	DT	6-3	290	2	Louisiana Tech	D3-21	D3-Phi-21
	LINEBACKERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
54	Bradley, Shaun	LB	6-1	240	3	Temple	D6a-20	D6a-Phi-20
17	Dean, Nakobe	LB	5-11	231	1	Georgia	D3-22	D3-Phi-22
53	Elliss, Christian	LB	6-3	231	1	Idaho	FA-21	FA-Min-21
58	Johnson, Kyron	LB	6-0	235	1	Kansas	D6a-22	D6a-Phi-22
48	Johnson, Patrick	LB	6-2	248	2	Tulane	D7-21	D7-Phi-21
41	Morrow, Nicholas	LB	6-0	225	5	Greenville	FA-Chi-23	FA-LV-17
7	Reddick, Haason	LB	6-1	240	6	Temple	FA-Car-22	D1-Ari-17
52	Taylor, Davion	LB	6-1	230	3	Colorado	D3-20	D3-Phi-20
	DEFENSIVE BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
32	Blankenship, Reed	S	6-1	203	1	Middle Tennessee	FA-22	FA-Phi-22
24	Bradberry, James	CB	6-1	212	7	Samford	FA-NYG-22	D2-Car-16
26	Edmunds, Terrell	S	6-1	217	5	Virginia Tech	FA-Pit-23	D1-Pit-18
30	Evans, Justin	S	6-0	199	4	Texas A&M	FA-NO-23	D2-TB-17
31	Goodrich, Mario	CB	6-0	186	1	Clemson	FA-22	FA-Phi-22
28	Jobe, Josh	CB	5-11	190	1	Alabama	FA-22	FA-Phi-22
29	Maddox, Avonte	CB	5-9	184	5	Pittsburgh	D4a-18	D4a-Phi-18
36	McCollum, Tristin	S	6-3	195	1	Sam Houston	FA-23	FA-Hou-22
27	McPhearson, Zech	CB	5-11	191	2	Texas Tech	D4-21	D4-Phi-21
33	Scott, Josiah	CB	5-9	185	3	Michigan State	T-Jac-21	D4a-Jac-20
2	Slay, Darius	CB	6-0	190	10	Mississippi State	T-Det-20	D2-Det-13
42	Wallace, K'Von	S	5-11	205	3	Clemson	D4a-20	D4a-Phi-20
38	Williams, Greedy	CB	6-2	185	4	LSU	FA-Cle-23	D2-Cle-19
	SPECIALISTS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
4	Elliott, Jake	K	5-9	167	6	Memphis	PS-Cin-17	D5-Cin-17
8	Siposs, Arryn	P	6-2	212	2	Auburn	FA-21	FA-Det-20

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	6	DeVonta Smith	85	Tyrie Cleveland
WR	11	A.J. Brown	18	Britain Covey
WR	13	Olamide Zaccheaus	16	Quez Watkins
LT	68	Jordan Mailata	50	Fred Johnson
LG	69	Landon Dickerson	78	Sua Opeta
C	62	Jason Kelce	67	Cameron Tom
RG	51	Cam Jurgens	64	Brett Toth
RT	65	Lane Johnson	63	Jack Driscoll
TE	88	Dallas Goedert	89	Jack Stoll
QB	1	Jalen Hurts	8	Marcus Mariota
RB	0	D'Andre Swift	23	Rashaad Penny

DEFENSE

DE	55	Brandon Graham	75	Tarron Jackson
DT	91	Fletcher Cox	90	Jordan Davis
DT	93	Milton Williams	98	Jalen Carter (R)
DE	94	Josh Sweat	96	Derek Barnett
OLB	41	Nicholas Morrow	52	Davion Taylor
MLB	17	Nakobe Dean	54	Shaun Bradley
OLB	7	Haason Reddick	3	Nolan Smith (R)
CB	2	Darius Slay	27	Zech McPhearson
CB	24	James Bradberry	38	Greedy Williams
S	26	Terrell Edmunds	43	Sydney Brown (R)
S	32	Reed Blankenship	42	K'Von Wallace

SPECIALISTS

K	4	Jake Elliott	KR	35	Boston Scott
P	10	Arryn Siposs	PR	18	Britain Covey

-15.5%

The Eagles' stout defense, which includes cornerbacks Darius Slay and James Bradberry, ranked first in pass defense Defense-adjusted Value over Average (DVOA) with -15.5 percent, according to Football Outsiders.

EAGLES IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: A-

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Jalen Carter	DT	6-3	314	Georgia
2.	Nolan Smith	LB	6-2	238	Georgia
3.	Tyler Steen	OT	6-6	321	Alabama
3.	Sydney Brown	S	5-10	211	Illinois
4.	Kelee Ringo	CB	6-2	207	Georgia
6.	Tanner McKee	QB	6-6	231	Stanford
7.	Moro Ojomo	DT	6-3	292	Texas

The Eagles continued demonstrating their love for Georgia players by selecting three in the '23 Draft. Jalen Carter is clearly a huge talent, but questions about his off-field behavior and motor make him a more risky choice. Nolan Smith is undersized but can blast toward QBs off the edge, while Sydney Brown had six picks last year and has good instincts. Tyler Steen will provide depth this year but could slide inside to center or guard in the coming seasons. Kelee Ringo needs to become more consistent on the outside. Tanner McKee has a strong arm and great frame and makes good decisions. Moro Ojomo could provide depth in the middle of the defensive line.

COMMANDERS

NFC EAST FORECAST **4**

2023 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 10	Arizona	1:00
Sept. 17	at Denver	4:25
Sept. 24	vs Buffalo	1:00
Oct. 1	at Philadelphia	1:00
Oct. 5	Chicago	8:15
Oct. 15	at Atlanta	1:00
Oct. 22	at N.Y. Giants	1:00
Oct. 29	Philadelphia	1:00
Nov. 5	at New England	1:00
Nov. 12	at Seattle	4:25
Nov. 19	N.Y. Giants	1:00
Nov. 23	at Dallas	4:30
Dec. 3	Miami	1:00
Dec. 10	BYE	
Dec. 17	at L.A. Rams	4:05
Dec. 24	at N.Y. Jets	1:00
Dec. 31	San Francisco	1:00
Jan. 7	Dallas	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

THE COACHES

Head Coach: Ron Rivera
Record With Team: 22-27-1
Career Record: 98-90-2
Assistant Head Coach/Offensive Coordinator: Eric Bieniemy
Defensive Coordinator: Jack Del Rio
Special Teams Coordinator: Nate Kaczor
Quarterbacks: Tavita Pritchard
Running Backs: Randy Jordan
Wide Receivers: Bobby Engram
Tight Ends: Juan Castillo
Defensive Line: Jeff Zgonina
Linebackers: Steve Russ
Defensive Backs: Brent Vieselmeyer
Safeties: Richard Rodgers

It wouldn't be a Washington offseason without massive controversy and upheaval, and this one has been no exception — with the sea-change ahead of 2023 for the recently rebranded Commanders including turnover at the positions of quarterback, offensive coordinator and owner.

As the tumultuous (and some would say disastrous) Dan Snyder era neared its end, the Commanders were ready to embrace the Josh Harris Era, with the presumptive new owner inheriting a franchise that hasn't won a playoff game in 18 years, but that went 8-8-1 and narrowly missed a playoff berth last season. Or should this new chapter be called the Eric Bieniemy Era, for the new offensive coordinator and assistant head coach who comes to Washington after winning two Super Bowls with the Chiefs? Or perhaps the Sam Howell Era, for the quarterback who goes into camp as the presumptive starter despite having made only one start in his NFL career?

One thing is certain: The Ron Rivera Era almost certainly hangs in the balance. The Commanders' 61-year-old head coach, after a third straight non-winning season in Washington, was on the hot seat over the winter but survived — perhaps thanks to the ownership change. One more mediocre season, for a new owner who didn't hire him, would surely spell the end for Rivera.

OFFENSE

While Bieniemy had massive success in Kansas City, going to the Super Bowl three times and becoming a perennial head-coaching candidate in the process, the Commanders gig will be his first stint as the primary play-caller (head coach Andy Reid maintained those duties with the Chiefs). Although it was expected that Bieniemy would import his version of the West Coast offense to Washington, sadly for the Commanders, he couldn't find a way to bring Patrick Mahomes and Travis Kelce with him.

Whether it's Howell or veteran Jacoby Brissett (a March free-agent signee) at quarterback, their mobility should serve them well in Bieniemy's system, which leans heavily on run-pass options and short-to-intermediate throws. That should enable the offense to get the ball into the hands of the team's three talented, playmaking receivers: Terry McLaurin, Jahan Dotson and Curtis Samuel.

Constructing an offensive line to protect their QB was an offseason priority of the Commanders, who quickly signed two veterans during free agency in Andrew Wylie and Nick Gates and then used their third- and fourth-round draft picks on versatile blockers Ricky Stromberg and Braeden Daniels. Once the position battles shake out in training camp, Stromberg could wind up starting or backing up Gates at center; his arrival expedited the departure of veteran Chase Roullier, who was released in May. Daniels is an option at either guard or tackle spot.

Brian Robinson Jr. and Antonio Gibson give the Commanders two solid running backs, with Robinson's bruising style on vivid display in the second half of his rookie season and Gibson's pass-catching ability and knack for reaching the end zone making him a good third-down option. Gibson, however, is also coming off his least productive season (546 rushing yards, three TDs) as a pro, and his rookie contract comes to an end after 2023.

It was a surprise the Commanders didn't address the tight end position in the draft, given their paltry production there in 2022 — Commanders tight ends accounted for only two of the team's 24 touchdown receptions, an 8.3 percent share that ranked as the lowest in the NFL — and Bieniemy's predilection for utilizing the tight end in the passing game. Logan Thomas was a revelation as

ERIC HARTLINE/USA TODAY SPORTS

a first-time starter in 2020 but has endured a string of injuries since, while John Bates is considered a better blocker than pass-catcher. Armani Rogers, a converted quarterback, showed flashes of big-time ability in 2022 before he, too, was stymied by injuries.

DEFENSE

The Commanders had the NFL's third-best total defense (allowing just 304.6 yards per game) in 2022 for coordinator Jack Del Rio, anchored by an elite front four featuring a quartet of former first-round picks — ends Chase Young and Montez Sweat and tackles Daron Payne and Jonathan Allen. All four will be back (thanks to a new deal for Payne over the winter), but the uneasy subtext for 2023 is how Young, the former No. 2 overall draft pick in 2020, finds himself at a career crossroads after the team declined to pick up his fifth-year option. Another subpar, injury-marred season could lock in his status as a draft bust; a resurgence could wipe away all the negatives and leave the team scrambling to find a way to keep him.

Thanks to the draft, the Commanders' defensive backfield went from a liability with little depth to a strength that featured six players capable of starting — five of whom (Emmanuel Forbes and Jartavius Martin in 2023, Benjamin St-Juste and Darrick Forrest in 2021, and Kamren Curl in 2020) came via the past four drafts. (Veteran Kendall Fuller is the sixth, though he was in danger of being cut for financial reasons.) Forbes, the team's first-round pick in April, was tabbed for his ballhawking talents, a critical factor for a team that ranked 28th in the NFL in 2022 with just nine interceptions. Martin's versatility as a free safety/nickel back mirrors that of Curl and gives the team some options in disguising coverages.

The Commanders' linebacking corps is led by third-year pro Jamin Davis, who had a breakout year in 2022, leading the team with 104 tackles and accounting for three of the four sacks notched by Washington LBs. But there isn't much depth here, particularly after starter Cole Holcomb left for Pittsburgh during free agency. They did re-sign Khaleke Hudson and brought in free agent Cody Barton on a one-year deal.

SPECIALISTS

In one sense, fourth-and-long is the Commanders' most comfortable down-and-distance, in that they know they can always count on punter Tress Way. The longest-tenured player on the roster, Way, entering his 10th season in Washington, is coming off his second career Pro Bowl season and is known as a master of the directional punt — the ability to place a ball outside the numbers near either sideline without telegraphing his intent. Kicker Joey Slye is a longtime Rivera favorite, dating to their days in Carolina, and while his hold on the job is less secure than Way's, the team didn't bring in serious competition, which bodes well for Slye. Top punt returner Dax Milne and kick returner Gibson both return to the roster, though first-round pick Forbes is an intriguing option given his history of pick-6s as a DB in college.

FINAL ANALYSIS

As unsettling as it may be to go into a season with a wholly unproven quarterback, particularly in a division that produced three playoff teams in 2022, this is probably the most talented roster in Rivera's four years in Washington. If Howell (or Brissett, for that matter) rewards the team's faith, if the defense can generate more turnovers and if the roster can avoid massive injuries — admittedly, all major "ifs" — this could be a playoff contender. If not, there will almost certainly be more upheaval to come, with Rivera the likeliest to take the fall.

2022 RESULTS (8-8-1)

Sept. 11	Jacksonville	W	28-22
Sept. 18	at Detroit	L	27-36
Sept. 25	Philadelphia	L	8-24
Oct. 2	at Dallas	L	10-25
Oct. 9	Tennessee	L	17-21
Oct. 13	at Chicago	W	12-7
Oct. 23	Green Bay	W	23-21
Oct. 30	at Indianapolis	W	17-16
Nov. 6	Minnesota	L	17-20
Nov. 14	at Philadelphia	W	32-21
Nov. 20	at Houston	W	23-10
Nov. 27	Atlanta	W	19-13
Dec. 4	at N.Y. Giants (ot)	T	20-20
Dec. 18	N.Y. Giants	L	12-20
Dec. 24	at San Francisco	L	20-37
Jan. 1	Cleveland	L	10-24
Jan. 8	Dallas	W	26-6

2022 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	330.3	20	11
Rushing	126.1	12	9
Passing	204.2	21	11
Scoring	18.9	24	14
Third Down %	35.2	26	15
EPA/Play	-0.066	25	14
TO Differential	-5	T26	T14

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	304.6	3	3
Rushing	113.3	11	2
Passing	191.3	4	3
Scoring	20.2	7	3
Interceptions	9	28	14
Sacks	43	12	7
EPA/Play	-0.059	5	4

2022 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Taylor Heinicke	259	161	1,859	12	6
Carson Wentz	276	172	1,755	11	9

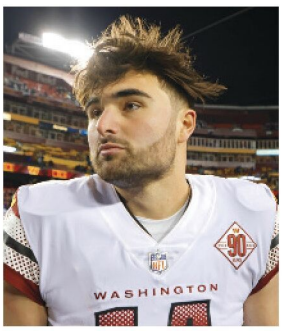
RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Brian Robinson Jr.	205	797	3.9	2
Antonio Gibson	149	546	3.7	3
Curtis Samuel	38	187	4.9	1

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Terry McLaurin	77	1,191	15.5	5
Curtis Samuel	64	656	10.3	4
Antonio Gibson	46	353	7.7	2
Logan Thomas	39	323	8.3	1
Jahan Dotson	35	523	14.9	7

KICKING: Joey Slye, 25-30 FGs, 24-28 PAT, 99 points
TACKLES: Jamin Davis, 104; Darrick Forrest, 88
SACKS: Daron Payne, 11.5; Montez Sweat, 8.0
INTERCEPTIONS: Darrick Forest, 4; Kendall Fuller, 3

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

THE QUARTERBACK CAROUSEL This stat gets more mind-blowing each year: Last season in Week 18, **Sam Howell** became the 34th quarterback to start a game for the franchise since its last Super Bowl title following the 1991 season, joining Mark Rypien, Rich Gannon, Cary Conklin, Heath Shuler, John Friesz, Gus Frerotte, Jeff Hostetler, Trent Green, Brad Johnson, Jeff George, Tony Banks, Shane Matthews, Patrick Ramsey, Danny Wuerffel, Tim Hasselbeck, Mark Brunell, Jason Campbell, Todd Collins, Donovan McNabb, Rex Grossman, John Beck, Robert Griffin III, Kirk Cousins, Alex Smith, Colt McCoy, Mark Sanchez, Case Keenum, Dwayne Haskins Jr., Kyle Allen, Tayler Heinicke, Ryan Fitzpatrick, Garrett Gilbert and Carson Wentz.



CHASING A RESURGENCE If head coach Ron Rivera indeed loses his job at the end of this season, it might be his first draft pick with the franchise that does him in. Back in 2020, his first season in D.C., Rivera used the No. 2 overall pick on Chase Young — passing on (among others) QBs Tua Tagovailoa and Justin Herbert. Though Young was the NFL's Defensive Rookie of the Year that season, he was injured midway through 2021 and has amassed just 1.5 sacks since. Commanders fans, in fact, may never forgive the team for winning its final game in 2019 and thus losing the No. 1 overall pick to the Bengals, who used it to take QB Joe Burrow. But this year will go a long way towards determining whether Young is considered a draft bust.

HERE'S TO YOU, MR. ROBINSON It's unlikely any recent NFL running back has endured a more traumatic but ultimately triumphant rookie season than Washington's Brian Robinson Jr. in 2022. On Aug. 28, he was shot twice during an attempted robbery in D.C. but was lucky in that the bullets did not do major damage, allowing Robinson to miss only four games. He returned to the field in Week 5 and scored his first touchdown the following week, 46 days after being shot.

SCOUTING THE COMMANDERS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP WASHINGTON "With owner Dan Snyder on the verge of finally selling the team, Washington fans feel like they're on the brink of victory. It was beyond time for a change. Talk about a toxic atmosphere. … Will a new owner repeat Snyder's free-agent spending sprees or try a fresh approach to restore Washington's football prominence? It's safe to say the culture and standards will be better. … They missed so badly on Carson Wentz it makes you doubt their entire decision-making process. The guy was unreliable and injury-prone, and gone the next offseason. … Sam Howell has some skills. He's got a shot to be a solid starter. If it doesn't work out, maybe they're in the Caleb Williams draft market next year. Having Jacoby Brissett in place gives them a proven insurance policy. … Building around Terry McLaurin is a real key to revitalizing the offense as Washington enters a new era. … I'm not sold on this offensive line overall. … A full season for Brian Robinson Jr. after the shooting incident last year should provide a much fuller look at everything he can do. … There just wasn't enough for them to pick up Chase Young's fifth-year option. You can't pay on past potential; you have to go with your gut and what's going on now. … I think Daron Payne, whom they quietly shopped in trade discussions last year, was worth every penny of that deal. … Cody Barton is underrated. … Yes, he's skinny, but Emmanuel Forbes can flat-out play. … Curtis Samuel is so versatile."

GEOFF BURKE/USA TODAY SPORTS

2023 COMMANDERS VETERAN ROSTER

	QUARTERBACKS	POS.	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
12	Brissett, Jacoby	QB	6-4	235	7	NC State	FA-Cle-23	D3b-NE-16
16	Fromm, Jake	QB	6-2	215	2	Georgia	FA-22	D5-Buf-20
14	Howell, Sam	QB	6-1	225	1	North Carolina	D5a-22	D5a-Was-22
	RUNNING BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
48	Armah, Alex	RB	6-1	255	6	West Georgia	FA-22	D6-Car-17
24	Gibson, Antonio	RB	6-2	221	3	Memphis	D3-20	D3-Was-20
8	Robinson Jr., Brian	RB	6-1	225	1	Alabama	D3-22	D3-Was-22
41	Williams, Jonathan	RB	5-11	223	7	Arkansas	PS-NYG-21	D5-Buf-16
	RECEIVERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
87	Bates, John	TE	6-6	256	2	Boise State	D4-21	D4-Was-21
2	Brown, Dyami	WR	6-0	185	2	North Carolina	D3b-21	D3b-Was-21
1	Dotson, Jahan	WR	5-11	184	1	Penn State	D1-22	D1-Was-22
86	Erickson, Alex	WR	6-0	195	7	Wisconsin	FA-22	FA-Cin-16
80	Hodges, Curtis	TE	6-8	240	1	Arizona State	FA-22	FA-Was-22
19	Kemp, Marcus	WR	6-4	210	5	Hawai'i	FA-23	FA-KC-17
83	McGowan, Kyric	WR	5-11	198	1	Georgia Tech	FA-22	FA-Was-22
17	McLaurin, Terry	WR	6-0	210	4	Ohio State	D3-19	D3-Was-19
15	Milne, Dax	WR	6-1	190	2	BYU	D7c-21	D7c-Was-21
88	Rogers, Armani	TE	6-5	225	1	Ohio	FA-22	FA-Was-22
10	Samuel, Curtis	WR	5-11	195	6	Ohio State	FA-Car-21	D2a-Car-17
82	Thomas, Logan	TE	6-6	250	9	Virginia Tech	FA-Det-20	D4-Ari-14
85	Turner, Cole	TE	6-6	240	1	Nevada	D5b-22	D5b-Was-22
	OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
62	Akingbulu, Alex	T	6-5	300	1	Fresno State	FA-22	FA-Was-22
77	Charles, Saahdiq	G/T	6-4	322	3	LSU	D4a-20	D4a-Was-20
76	Cosmi, Samuel	T	6-7	309	2	Texas	D2-21	D2-Was-21
63	Gates, Nick	C	6-6	318	5	Nebraska	FA-NYG-23	FA-NYG-18
69	Larsen, Tyler	C	6-4	325	8	Utah State	FA-21	FA-Mia-14
74	Laufenberg, Nolan	G	6-3	315	1	Air Force	FA-21	FA-Den-21
72	Leno Jr., Charles	T	6-3	307	9	Boise State	FA-21	D7-Chi-14
78	Lucas, Cornelius	T	6-8	327	9	Kansas State	FA-Chi-20	FA-Det-14
67	Monteiro, Aaron	T	6-6	315	2	Boston College	FA-22	FA-Mia-19
68	Norwell, Andrew	G	6-6	325	9	Ohio State	FA-Jac-22	FA-Car-14
75	Paul, Chris	G	6-4	324	1	Tulsa	D7a-22	D7a-Was-22
66	Scott, Trent	T	6-5	320	5	Grambling State	FA-Pit-23	FA-LAC-18
61	Sutherland, Keaton	G	6-5	315	4	Texas A&M	FA-22	FA-Cin-19
71	Wylie, Andrew	G/T	6-5	304	5	Eastern Michigan	FA-KC-23	FA-Ind-17
	DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
93	Allen, Jonathan	DT	6-3	300	6	Alabama	D1-17	D1-Was-17
92	Anderson, Abdullah	DT	6-4	307	2	Bucknell	FA-Atl-23	FA-Chi-18
64	Bada, David	DT	6-4	293	2	None	FA-22	FA-Was-20
56	Bradley-King, William	DE	6-4	248	2	Baylor	D7a-21	D7a-Was-21
98	Mathis, Phidarian	DT	6-4	312	1	Alabama	D2-22	D2-Was-22
97	Obada, Efe	DE	6-6	265	5	None	FA-Buf-22	FA-Dal-15
94	Payne, Daron	DT	6-3	320	5	Alabama	D1-18	D1-Was-18
79	Potoa'e, Benning	DT	6-3	290	3	Washington	FA-22	FA-TB-20
91	Ridgeway, John	DT	6-5	321	1	Arkansas	W-Dal-22	D5-Dal-22
96	Smith-Williams, James	DE	6-3	265	3	NC State	D7b-20	D7b-Was-20
90	Sweat, Montez	DE	6-6	262	4	Mississippi State	D1b-19	D1b-Was-19
58	Toney, Shaka	DE	6-3	231	2	Penn State	D7b-21	D7b-Was-21
95	Toohill, Casey	DE	6-5	250	3	Stanford	W-Phi-20	D7-Phi-20
99	Young, Chase	DE	6-5	265	3	Ohio State	D1-20	D1-Was-20
	LINEBACKERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
57	Barton, Cody	LB	6-2	237	4	Utah	FA-Sea-23	D3-Sea-19
52	Davis, Jamin	LB	6-4	234	2	Kentucky	D1-21	D1-Was-21
46	Eifler, Milo	LB	6-1	228	2	Illinois	PS-Mia-21	FA-NYJ-21
50	Gerry, Nathan	LB	6-2	230	6	Nebraska	FA-22	D5-Phi-17
45	Harris, De'Jon	LB	6-0	245	3	Arkansas	FA-22	FA-NE-20
47	Hudson, Khaleke	LB	6-0	220	3	Michigan	D5b-20	D5b-Was-20
51	Mayo, David	LB	6-2	240	8	Texas State	FA-NYG-21	D5-Car-15
50	White, Drew	LB	6-0	228	1	Notre Dame	FA-22	FA-Was-22
	DEFENSIVE BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
30	Apke, Troy	CB	6-1	205	5	Penn State	FA-22	D4-Was-18
35	Butler, Percy	S	6-0	190	1	Louisiana	D4-22	D4-Was-22
40	Castro-Fields, Tariq	CB	6-1	197	1	Penn State	W-SF-22	D6-SF-22
31	Curl, Kamren	S	6-2	198	3	Arkansas	D7a-20	D7a-Was-20
3	Dantzler Sr., Cameron	CB	6-2	190	3	Mississippi State	W-Min-23	D3a-Min-20
38	Fields, DaMarcus	CB	6-0	200	1	Texas Tech	FA-22	FA-NO-22
22	Forrest, Darrick	S	6-0	200	2	Cincinnati	D5-21	D5-Was-21
29	Fuller, Kendall	CB	5-11	198	7	Virginia Tech	FA-KC-20	D3-Was-16
34	Holmes, Christian	CB	6-1	205	1	Oklahoma State	D7b-22	D7b-Was-22
36	Johnson, Danny	CB	5-9	181	5	Southern	FA-18	FA-Was-18
39	Reaves, Jeremy	S	5-11	200	5	South Alabama	FA-18	FA-Phi-18
25	St-Juste, Benjamin	CB	6-3	200	2	Minnesota	D3a-21	D3a-Was-21
37	Wildgoose, Rachad	CB	5-10	191	2	Wisconsin	W-NYJ-22	D6-Buf-21
	SPECIALISTS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
54	Cheeseman, Camaron	LS	6-4	230	2	Michigan	D6-21	D6-Was-21
6	Slye, Joey	K	5-11	213	4	Virginia Tech	FA-21	FA-NYG-19
5	Way, Tress	P	6-1	220	9	Oklahoma	W-Chi-14	FA-Chi-13

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	17	Terry McLaurin	2	Dyami Brown
WR	1	Jahan Dotson	19	Marcus Kemp
WR	10	Curtis Samuel	15	Dax Milne
LT	72	Charles Leno Jr.	79	Braeden Daniels (R)
LG	68	Andrew Norwell	75	Chris Paul
C	63	Nick Gates	53	Ricky Stromberg (R)
RG	76	Samuel Cosmi	77	Saahdiq Charles
RT	71	Andrew Wylie	78	Cornelius Lucas
TE	82	Logan Thomas	87	John Bates
QB	14	Sam Howell	12	Jacoby Brissett
RB	8	Brian Robinson Jr.	24	Antonio Gibson

DEFENSE

DE	90	Montez Sweat	95	Casey Toohill
DT	94	Daron Payne	64	David Bada
DT	93	Jonathan Allen	98	Phidarian Mathis
DE	99	Chase Young	96	James Smith-Williams
LB	52	Jamin Davis	47	Khaleke Hudson
LB	57	Cody Barton	51	David Mayo
CB	29	Kendall Fuller	3	Cameron Dantzler Sr.
CB	13	Emmanuel Forbes (R)	25	Benjamin St-Juste
NB	20	Jartavius Martin (R)	36	Danny Johnson
SS	31	Kamren Curl	39	Jeremy Reaves
FS	22	Darrick Forrest	35	Percy Butler

SPECIALISTS

K	6	Joey Slye	KR	24	Antonio Gibson
P	5	Tress Way	PR	15	Dax Milne

19.0%

The Commanders' rotation of quarterbacks last season combined for a 19.0 percent poor-throw rate, excluding spikes and throwaways. Only the Texans, Jets, Falcons, Bears and Raiders did worse.

COMMANDERS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B-

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Emmanuel Forbes	CB	6-0	180	Mississippi State
2.	Jartavius Martin	DB	6-0	195	Illinois
3.	Ricky Stromberg	C/G	6-4	306	Arkansas
4.	Braeden Daniels	G/T	6-4	297	Utah
5.	KJ Henry	DE	6-4	255	Clemson
6.	Chris Rodriguez Jr.	RB	5-11	224	Kentucky
7.	Andre Jones Jr.	LB	6-5	258	Louisiana

The Commanders had two critical needs entering the draft — secondary and offensive line — and wasted no time addressing them. Emmanuel Forbes is a proven ballhawk with a big-play pedigree; he had 14 interceptions in three years at Mississippi State, with six of them returned for TDs. But his slight frame made him feel like a gamble, especially when the Patriots, one pick later, took Oregon's Christian Gonzalez, another cornerback who is 30 pounds heavier. Jartavius Martin is a versatile athlete who could toggle between free safety and the "Buffalo" nickel spot in the five-DB set. Ricky Stromberg and Braeden Daniels should both contribute immediately on that depth-challenged O-line. Fifth-rounder KJ Henry was a depth pick for a roster that will see its four top edge-rushers are set to hit free agency.

CHI BEARS

NFC NORTH FORECAST **4**

2023 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 10	Green Bay	4:25
Sept. 17	at Tampa Bay	1:00
Sept. 24	at Kansas City	4:25
Oct. 1	Denver	1:00
Oct. 5	at Washington	8:15
Oct. 15	Minnesota	1:00
Oct. 22	Las Vegas	1:00
Oct. 29	at L.A. Chargers	8:20
Nov. 5	at New Orleans	1:00
Nov. 9	Carolina	8:15
Nov. 19	at Detroit	1:00
Nov. 27	at Minnesota	8:15
Dec. 3	BYE	
Dec. 10	Detroit	1:00
Dec. 17	at Cleveland	TBD
Dec. 24	Arizona	4:25
Dec. 31	Atlanta	1:00
Jan. 7	at Green Bay	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

THE COACHES

Head Coach: Matt Eberflus
Record With Team: 3-14
Career Record: 3-14
Offensive Coordinator: Luke Getsy
Defensive Coordinator: Alan Williams
Special Teams Coordinator: Richard Hightower
Quarterbacks: Andrew Janocko
Running Backs: David Walker
Passing Game Coordinator/Wide Receivers: Tyke Tolbert
Tight Ends: Jim Dray
Offensive Line: Chris Morgan
Defensive Line: Travis Smith
Linebackers: Dave Borgonzi
Cornerbacks/Passing Game Coordinator: Jon Hoke
Safeties: Andre Curtis

After finishing an NFL-worst 3-14 last year, the Bears entered a pivotal offseason armed with the most salary cap space of any team in the league and the No 1 pick in the draft. Second-year general manager Ryan Poles used those assets to upgrade the roster on both sides of the ball via trade, free agency and the draft.

The Bears dealt the No. 1 selection to the Panthers in exchange for receiver DJ Moore, two first-round picks and two second-round selections. They signed several free agents, most notably linebackers Tremaine Edmunds (Bills) and T.J. Edwards (Eagles), defensive end DeMarcus Walker (Titans), guard Nate Davis (Titans), running back D'Onta Foreman (Panthers) and tight end Robert Tonyan (Packers). And they filled more needs in the draft, selecting Tennessee offensive tackle Darnell Wright in the first round (No. 10) and three defensive players on Day 2: Florida defensive tackle Gervon Dexter Sr. (53) and Miami (Fla.) cornerback Tyrique Stevenson (56) in the second round and South Carolina defensive tackle Zacch Pickens (64) in the third round.

It was a promising start to the rebuild for a Chicago franchise that has made the playoffs just twice in the past dozen years and hasn't won a playoff game since the 2010 season.

OFFENSE

A main focus of the offseason was surrounding promising third-year quarterback Justin Fields with more talent, a goal that Poles believes the Bears accomplished. Says Poles: "You want to support your quarterback. We all know that's where it starts. … It's got to come together, but I feel like on paper we've done a good job to surround him with good talent."

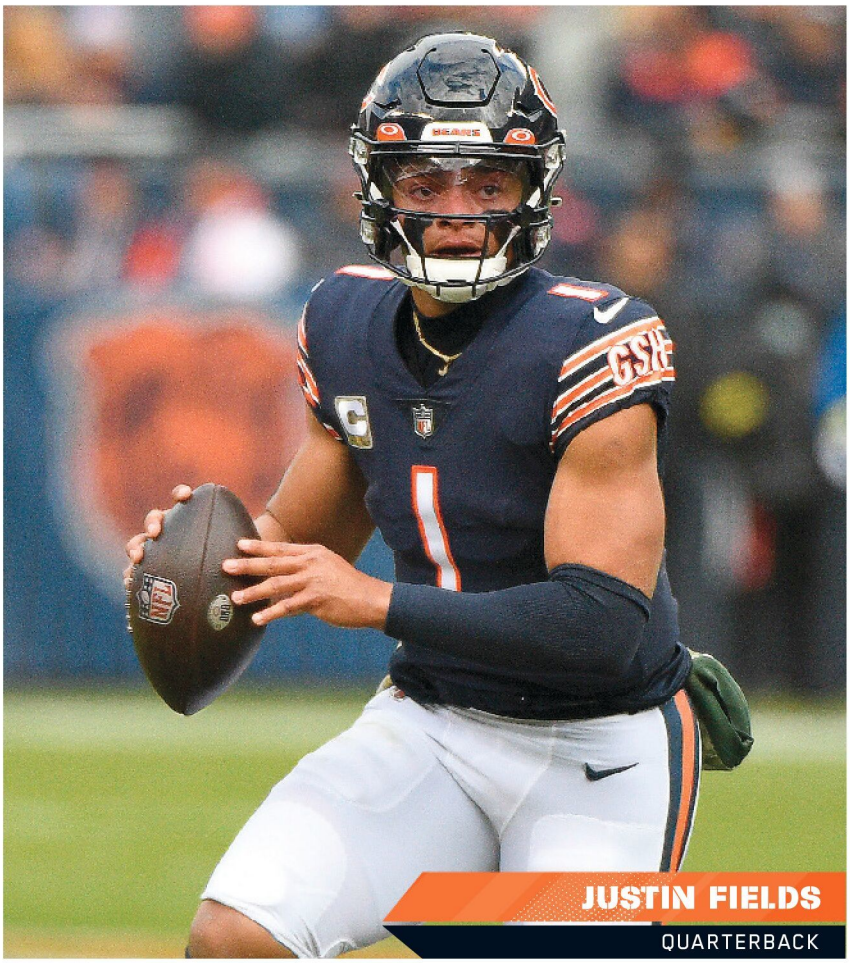
Fields emerged as an impact player in 2022, rushing for 1,143 yards and eight touchdowns, the second-most rushing yards by a quarterback in NFL history behind only Lamar Jackson's 1,206 yards for Baltimore in 2019. That included highlight-reel TD runs of 67, 61 and 55 yards. Fields helped the Bears rank No. 1 in the NFL in rushing. But their offense finished last in passing, and Poles acknowledged during his end-of-season press conference that Fields must improve in that vital aspect of the game.

The most significant offseason addition was Moore, whose 5,201 career receiving yards in five seasons with the Panthers are more than Bears all-time leader Johnny Morris' 5,059 — and Moore is just 26. The 5-foot-11, 210-pounder, who compiled more than 1,100 yards in three consecutive seasons in Carolina from 2019-21, gives the Bears the legitimate No. 1 receiver they've lacked since Brandon Marshall left following the 2014 season.

Moore joins Darnell Mooney and Chase Claypool to give Chicago a formative trio of receivers. They also added speedster Tyler Scott in the fourth round of the draft.

An offensive line that allowed the fourth-most sacks (58) in the league last year was buoyed by the addition of two likely starters in veteran Davis at right guard and first-round pick Wright at right tackle. Poles describes Wright as "a tone-setter" due to his nasty demeanor on the field, saying: "He plays with an edge to him, which we love and want more of."

Despite losing David Montgomery in free agency to the Lions, the Bears appear to still be deep in the backfield with Foreman joining third-year pro Khalil Herbert and fourth-round pick Roschon Johnson, a speedy and powerful



MATT MARTON-USA TODAY SPORTS

runner who rushed for 554 yards and five touchdowns last year while teaming with Falcons first-round pick Bijan Robinson at Texas.

DEFENSE

After mustering a league-low 20 sacks last year, the pass rush remains the Bears' biggest question mark heading into the season. The only edge rusher they added during the offseason was Walker, who had 12.5 sacks over his first five NFL seasons before registering a career-high seven last year with the Titans.

The Bears fortified their linebacking corps by adding two key starters in free agency. Edmunds appears to be a perfect fit at middle linebacker in head coach Matt Eberflus' defense given the 6-foot-5, 250-pounder's size, strength and leadership qualities. Edmunds, a two-time Pro Bowl selection, was voted a team captain in Buffalo at 21 and has recorded at least 100 tackles in each of his five NFL seasons.

Edwards is also a productive, seasoned pro who led the NFC champion Eagles with 159 tackles last year. A self-made player who grew up in the Chicago area rooting for the Bears, Edwards entered the NFL with Philadelphia in 2019 as an undrafted free agent and developed into a three-year starter on one of the league's best teams.

The Bears' third starting linebacker in 2023 is expected to be second-year pro Jack Sanborn, who flourished as an undrafted rookie last year following the midseason trade of veteran Roquan Smith to the Ravens. Sanborn and Edwards reunite in Chicago after playing one season together at Wisconsin.

The strength of the Bears' defense appears to be their secondary, which features four returning starters in safeties Eddie Jackson and Jaquan Brisker and cornerbacks Jaylon Johnson and Kyler Gordon. After a couple of down years, Jackson was enjoying a bounce-back 2022 season — topping the defense with 61 tackles and four interceptions, while leading in voting for NFC free safeties for the Pro Bowl — before sustaining a season-ending Lisfranc injury in Week 12.

The Bears added Stevenson in the second round and project him to play outside, with 2022 second-round pick Gordon moving inside to nickel in passing situations.

SPECIALISTS

Since joining the Bears in 2020 for a second stint with the team, Cairo Santos has hit 90.6 percent of his field-goal attempts (77-of-85), making him the most accurate kicker in franchise history. That included 21-of-23 (91.3 percent) last season, but Santos uncharacteristically struggled on extra points, missing a career-high five PATs.

Punter Trenton Gill, a 2022 seventh-round pick, had a strong rookie season, posting a gross average of 46.0 yards on 66 punts and a 40.3-yard net average that was the third best in Bears history.

FINAL ANALYSIS

Rome wasn't built in a day; neither are championship football teams. To that end, Poles has preached patience, acknowledging that the Bears won't be able to fix all of their needs in one offseason, regardless of how much cap space or draft picks are at their disposal. While the team is in the midst of a major overhaul, expectations are for the Bears to show vast improvement over last season, when they lost 14 games and dropped 10 consecutive contests for the first time in their 103-year history.

One other positive development for the Bears during the offseason was Green Bay's trade of quarterback Aaron Rodgers to the Jets. The four-time NFL MVP was 22-5 against Chicago with the Packers, winning 22 of the 24 games he started and finished against the Bears. He passed for a gaudy 43 TDs with just two interceptions in his final 17 starts versus Chicago.

2022 RESULTS (3-14)

Sept. 11	San Francisco	W	19-10
Sept. 18	at Green Bay	L	10-27
Sept. 25	Houston	W	23-20
Oct. 2	at N.Y. Giants	L	12-20
Oct. 9	at Minnesota	L	22-29
Oct. 13	Washington	L	7-12
Oct. 24	at New England	W	33-14
Oct. 30	at Dallas	L	29-49
Nov. 6	Miami	L	32-35
Nov. 13	Detroit	L	30-31
Nov. 20	at Atlanta	L	24-27
Nov. 27	at N.Y. Jets	L	10-31
Dec. 4	Green Bay	L	19-28
Dec. 18	Philadelphia	L	20-25
Dec. 24	Buffalo	L	13-35
Jan. 1	at Detroit	L	10-41
Jan. 8	Minnesota	L	13-29

2022 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	307.8	28	14
Rushing	177.3	1	1
Passing	130.5	32	16
Scoring	19.2	23	13
Third Down %	40.9	13	6
EPA/Play	-0.037	23	14
TO Differential	-2	T20	T10

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	375.9	29	14
Rushing	157.3	31	16
Passing	218.6	17	9
Scoring	27.2	32	16
Interceptions	14	T12	T7
Sacks	20	32	16
EPA/Play	0.123	32	16

2022 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Justin Fields	318	192	2,242	17	11
Trevor Siemian	26	15	184	1	1
Nathan Peterman	25	14	139	1	1

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Justin Fields	160	1,143	7.1	8
David Montgomery	201	801	4.0	5
Khalil Herbert	129	731	5.7	4

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Cole Kmet	50	544	10.9	7
Darnell Mooney	40	493	12.3	2
David Montgomery	34	316	9.3	1
E. St. Brown	21	323	15.4	1

KICKING: Cairo Santos, 21-23 FGs, 27-32 PAT, 90 points
TACKLES: Nicholas Morrow, 116; Jaquan Brisker, 104
SACKS: Jaquan Brisker, 4.0; Justin Jones, 3.0; Trevis Gipson, 3.0
INTERCEPTIONS: Eddie Jackson, 4; Kyler Gordon, 3

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

GOOD-LUCK CHARM Since becoming Bears head coach in 2022, Matt Eberflus has attended two Chicago Cubs games with his assistants: a 21-0 rout of the Pittsburgh Pirates April 23, 2022, that was the Cubs' most lopsided shutout victory since at least 1901, and a 13-0 win over the Dodgers April 21, 2023.

CURB APPEAL Several free agents signed by the Bears revealed that the presence of emerging quarterback Justin Fields factored into their decision to join the team. "Abso-(bleeping)-lutely," said defensive end **DeMarcus Walker**. "Justin Fields is definitely someone that I can't wait to go to battle with."

TOUGH CUSTOMER The mental toughness that Darnell Wright displayed during a grueling hour-long private workout played a key role in convincing the Bears to draft the Tennessee tackle. Bears offensive line coach Chris Morgan conducted the session. Said Wright: "He kicked my ass. He wanted to see what I was made of. It was hard, but I didn't quit. I think he respected that."

HOME SWEET HOME It's no coincidence that GM Ryan Poles has acquired four players who grew up in the Chicago area rooting for the Bears. He drafted Illinois center Doug Kramer (Hinsdale) in the sixth round; signed undrafted free agent linebacker Jack Sanborn (Lake Zurich) last year; and signed linebacker T.J. Edwards (Lake Villa) and tight end Robert Tonyan (McHenry) in free agency this year. "There's something to it for me," Poles says. "I think when you have pride of your local team that you grew up watching, you knew what this club meant to the city and you saw some good times with some good players, I think you're a little bit more motivated to perform at a high level and lead because you've seen guys do it at a high level before you. I always like that aspect. I think it just means a little bit more."

SCOUTING THE BEARS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP CHICAGO "I like what Ryan Poles and Ian Cunningham are doing. They're making some real progress with the roster, and they're accumulating valuable draft capital. You can make the argument that they should have kept the pick and drafted Bryce Young, but they already have a quarterback with some real upside in Justin Fields. The smart play was the trade with Carolina, and they got a ton back in return for the pick. If the Texans could do it all over again, they make that trade with Poles and get to the top spot to get Bryce. That's who they liked the most. … Having Carolina include DJ Moore in the trade was really necessary. They had to get a No. 1 WR because Darnell Mooney and Chase Claypool do not fit that job description. … Braxton Jones was a really good draft pick. To get a legitimate pass blocker where they drafted him, that's smart drafting. … Overall, I'm not feeling great about this offensive line. They've got to start investing more in the line. … Cole Kmet is a good combo tight end. … Fields is more than just a pure runner; he's one of the most dangerous throw-on-the-move quarterbacks. … D'Onta Foreman runs like a battering ram. He's difficult to bring down and has some wiggle in the open field. … DeMarcus Walker should help their pass rush a lot. … T.J. Edwards is a big investment for an off-ball linebacker, but he can play. It was expensive, though. … Jaquan Brisker was a real revelation as a rookie safety. He and Eddie Jackson are a strong tandem. … I like the Tyrique Stevenson pick. He has some real cover skills."

KAMIL KRZACZYNSKI/USA TODAY SPORTS

2023 BEARS VETERAN ROSTER

	QUARTERBACKS	POS.	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
1	Fields, Justin	QB	6-3	228	2	Ohio State	D1-21	D1-Chi-21
14	Peterman, Nathan	QB	6-2	225	6	Pittsburgh	FA-22	D5-Buf-17
15	Walker, PJ	QB	5-11	210	3	Temple	FA-Car-23	FA-Ind-17

	RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
35	Blasingame, Khari	RB	6-0	233	4	Vanderbilt	FA-Ten-22	FA-Min-19
25	Ebner, Trestan	RB	5-11	206	1	Baylor	D6b-22	D6b-Chi-22
21	Foreman, D'Onta	RB	6-0	235	5	Texas	FA-Car-23	D3-Hou-17
24	Herbert, Khalil	RB	5-9	212	2	Virginia Tech	D6a-21	D6a-Chi-21
20	Homer, Travis	RB	5-10	202	4	Miami (Fla.)	FA-Sea-23	D6a-Sea-19

	RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
87	Allen, Chase	TE	6-6	251	1	Iowa State	FA-22	FA-Chi-22
10	Claypool, Chase	WR	6-4	238	3	Notre Dame	T-Pit-22	D2-Pit-20
82	Fountain, Daurice	WR	6-2	210	4	Northern Iowa	FA-22	D5-Ind-18
12	Jones Jr., Velus	WR	6-0	200	1	Tennessee	D3-22	D3-Chi-22
85	Kmet, Cole	TE	6-6	260	3	Notre Dame	D2a-20	D2a-Chi-20
11	Mooney, Darnell	WR	5-11	173	3	Tulane	D5c-20	D5c-Chi-20
2	Moore, DJ	WR	5-11	210	5	Maryland	T-Car-23	D1-Car-18
86	Pettis, Dante	WR	6-1	195	5	Washington	FA-NYG-22	D2-SF-18
80	Reed, Joe	WR	6-0	224	2	Virginia	FA-23	D5-LAC-20
19	St. Brown, Equanimeous	WR	6-5	214	5	Notre Dame	FA-GB-22	D6-GB-18
81	Tonges, Jake	TE	6-4	240	1	California	FA-22	FA-Chi-22
18	Tonyan, Robert	TE	6-5	240	5	Indiana State	FA-GB-23	FA-Det-17
83	Webster, Nsimba	WR	5-10	180	4	E. Washington	FA-22	FA-LAR-19

	OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
75	Borom, Larry	OL	6-5	333	2	Missouri	D5-21	D5-Chi-21
69	Carter, Ja'Tyre	OL	6-3	311	1	Southern	D7a-22	D7a-Chi-22
64	Davis, Nate	OL	6-3	316	4	Charlotte	FA-Ten-23	D3-Ten-19
78	Diesch, Kellen	OL	6-7	300	1	Arizona State	FA-22	FA-Mia-22
60	Eiselen, Dieter	OL	6-4	320	2	Yale	FA-20	FA-Chi-20
76	Jenkins, Teven	OL	6-6	321	2	Oklahoma State	D2-21	D2-Chi-21
70	Jones, Braxton	OL	6-5	310	1	Southern Utah	D5a-22	D5a-Chi-22
68	Kramer, Doug	OL	6-2	300	1	Illinois	D6c-22	D6c-Chi-22
72	Leatherwood, Alex	OL	6-5	312	2	Alabama	W-LV-22	D1-LV-21
62	Patrick, Lucas	OL	6-3	313	7	Duke	FA-GB-22	FA-GB-16
65	Whitehair, Cody	OL	6-3	316	7	Kansas State	D2-16	D2-Chi-16

	DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
97	Billings, Andrew	DT	6-1	311	6	Baylor	FA-LV-23	D4-Cin-16
92	Brown, Andrew	DL	6-3	290	5	Virginia	FA-22	D5-Cin-18
99	Gipson, Trevis	DE	6-4	263	3	Tulsa	D5a-20	D5a-Chi-20
98	Green, Gerri	DL	6-4	252	4	Mississippi State	FA-22	D6-Ind-19
94	Green, Rasheem	DE	6-4	279	5	USC	FA-Hou-23	D3-Sea-18
95	Holmes, Jalyn	DL	6-5	277	4	Ohio State	FA-22	D4-Min-18
67	Jeter, Donovan	DL	6-3	325	1	Michigan	FA-23	FA-Pit-22
93	Jones, Justin	DL	6-3	309	5	NC State	FA-LAC-22	D3-LAC-18
52	Lewis, Terrell	DE	6-5	262	3	Alabama	D3a-20	D3a-Chi-20
91	Robinson, Dominique	DL	6-5	253	1	Miami (Ohio)	D5b-22	D5b-Chi-22
95	Walker, DeMarcus	DL	6-4	280	6	Florida State	FA-Ten-23	D2-Den-17

	LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
55	Cole, Dylan	LB	6-0	237	6	Missouri State	FA-Ten-23	FA-Hou-17
46	Deng, Kuony	LB	6-6	240	1	California	FA-22	FA-Chi-22
49	Edmunds, Tremaine	LB	6-5	250	5	Virginia Tech	FA-Buf-23	D1b-Buf-18
53	Edwards, T.J.	LB	6-1	242	4	Wisconsin	FA-Phi-23	FA-Phi-19
43	Gates, DeMarquis	LB	6-2	221	1	Ole Miss	FA-22	FA-Cle-18
47	Lee, Elijah	LB	6-3	228	5	Kansas State	FA-22	D7-Min-17
57	Sanborn, Jack	LB	6-2	234	1	Wisconsin	FA-22	FA-Chi-22
50	Weatherford, Sterling	LB	6-4	224	1	Miami (Ohio)	W-Ind-22	FA-Ind-22

	DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
39	Blackwell, Josh	DB	6-0	175	1	Duke	W-Phi-22	FA-Phi-22
9	Brisker, Jaquan	DB	6-1	200	1	Penn State	D2b-22	D2b-Chi-22
23	Colbert, Adrian	DB	6-2	205	6	Miami (Fla.)	FA-22	D7-SF-17
6	Gordon, Kyler	DB	6-0	200	1	Washington	D2a-22	D2a-Chi-22
37	Hicks, Elijah	DB	5-11	200	1	California	D7b-22	D7b-Chi-22
4	Jackson, Eddie	DB	6-0	206	6	Alabama	D4a-17	D4a-Chi-17
33	Johnson, Jaylon	DB	6-0	196	3	Utah	D2b-20	D2b-Chi-20
31	Jones, Jaylon	DB	5-11	190	1	Ole Miss	FA-22	FA-Chi-22
26	Ojemudia, Michael	DB	6-1	200	3	Iowa	W-Den-22	D3a-Chi-20
27	Stroman Jr., Greg	DB	6-0	182	5	Virginia Tech	FA-22	D7a-Was-18
38	Thomas, A.J.	DB	6-2	220	1	Western Michigan	FA-22	FA-Chi-22
22	Vildor, Kindle	DB	5-11	189	3	Georgia Southern	D5b-20	D5b-Chi-20

	SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
16	Gill, Trenton	P	6-4	219	1	NC State	D7c-22	D7c-Chi-22
8	Santos, Cairo	K	5-8	175	9	Tulane	FA-20	FA-KC-14
48	Scales, Patrick	LS	6-3	226	8	Utah State	FA-15	FA-Bal-11

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	2	DJ Moore	19	Equanimeous St. Brown
WR	11	Darnell Mooney	12	Velus Jones Jr.
WR	10	Chase Claypool	86	Dante Pettis
LT	70	Braxton Jones	75	Larry Borom
LG	76	Teven Jenkins	69	Ja'Tyre Carter
C	65	Cody Whitehair	62	Lucas Patrick
RG	64	Nate Davis	60	Dieter Eiselen
RT	58	Darnell Wright (R)	72	Alex Leatherwood
TE	85	Cole Kmet	18	Robert Tonyan
QB	1	Justin Fields	15	PJ Walker
RB	24	Khalil Herbert	21	D'Onta Foreman

DEFENSE

DE	99	Trevis Gipson	91	Dominique Robinson
DT	93	Justin Jones	98	Gervon Dexter Sr. (R)
DT	97	Andrew Billings	96	Zacch Pickens (R)
DE	95	DeMarcus Walker	94	Rasheem Green
SLB	57	Jack Sanborn	55	Dylan Cole
MLB	49	Tremaine Edmunds	44	Noah Sewell (R)
WLB	53	T.J. Edwards	43	DeMarquis Gates
CB	33	Jaylon Johnson	22	Kindle Vildor
CB	6	Kyler Gordon	29	Tyrique Stevenson (R)
S	4	Eddie Jackson	37	Elijah Hicks
S	9	Jaquan Brisker	38	A.J. Thomas

SPECIALISTS

K	8	Cairo Santos	KR	24	Khalil Herbert
P	16	Trenton Gill	PR	86	Dante Pettis

-34.5%

Justin Fields ranked last with a Defense-adjusted Value over Average (DVOA) of -34.5% among quarterbacks who attempted at least 200 passes last season, according to Football Outsiders.

BEARS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: A-

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Darnell Wright	OT	6-5	335	Tennessee
2.	Gervon Dexter Sr.	DT	6-6	312	Florida
2.	Tyrique Stevenson	CB	6-0	204	Miami (Fla.)
3.	Zacch Pickens	DT	6-4	300	South Carolina
4.	Roschon Johnson	RB	6-0	225	Texas
4.	Tyler Scott	WR	5-11	185	Cincinnati
5.	Noah Sewell	LB	6-2	253	Oregon
5.	Terell Smith	CB	6-0	207	Minnesota
7.	Travis Bell	DT	6-0	310	Kennesaw State
7.	Kendall Williamson	S	6-0	203	Stanford

The Bears' needs matched up with their draft board, enabling them to address several key areas. That started with Darnell Wright, a player they considered the best offensive lineman in the draft. He's expected to be a Day 1 starter at right tackle, though he possesses the versatility to play left tackle as well. The 3-technique is the engine that makes head coach Matt Eberflus' 4-3 defense run, and the Bears chose two players on Day 2 in Gervon Dexter Sr. and Zacch Pickens who both have experience at that vital position. The Bears added two intriguing skill position players on Day 3 in running back Roschon Johnson and receiver Tyler Scott, who both possess impressive traits.

DET LIONS

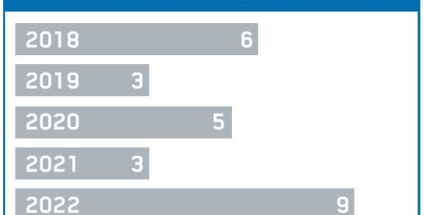
NFC NORTH FORECAST **2**

2023 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 7	at Kanas City	8:20
Sept. 17	Seattle	1:00
Sept. 24	Atlanta	1:00
Sept. 28	at Green Bay	8:15
Oct. 8	Carolina	1:00
Oct. 15	at Tampa Bay	1:00
Oct. 22	at Baltimore	1:00
Oct. 30	Las Vegas	8:15
Nov. 5	BYE	
Nov. 12	at L.A. Chargers	4:05
Nov. 19	Chicago	1:00
Nov. 23	Green Bay	12:30
Dec. 3	at New Orleans	1:00
Dec. 10	at Chicago	1:00
Dec. 17	Denver	TBD
Dec. 24	at Minnesota	1:00
Dec. 30	at Dallas	8:15
Jan. 7	Minnesota	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND



THE COACHES

Head Coach: Dan Campbell
Record With Team: 12-21-1
Career Record: 17-28-1
Offensive Coordinator: Ben Johnson
Defensive Coordinator: Aaron Glenn
Special Teams Coordinator: Dave Fipp
Quarterbacks: Mark Brunell
Passing Game Coord.: Tanner Engstrand
Assistant Head Coach/Running Backs: Scottie Montgomery
Wide Receivers: Antwaan Randle El
Tight Ends: Steve Heiden
Offensive Line: Hank Fraley
Defensive Line: John Scott Jr.
Linebackers: Kelvin Sheppard
Outside Linebackers: David Corrao
Defensive Backs: Brian Duker
Cornerbacks: Dre Bly

No team in the NFL made a bigger turnaround in 2022 than the rebuilding Lions. After a 3-13-1 season in 2021, Detroit rallied from a dismal 1-6 start to win eight of its final 10 games and barely miss the postseason. With a young roster core bolstered by significant free-agent upgrades on defense, Detroit enters Year 3 of the Brad Holmes-Dan Campbell era as a threat to win the NFC North. The Lions haven't won a division title since 1993, when the division was still known as the NFC Central. They haven't won a playoff game since 1991 and haven't won a NFL title since 1957. But Campbell isn't shying away from that history. In fact, he had these reminders painted in huge lettering on the wall in the team meeting room at the Lions' headquarters: 1993, 1991, 1957. Says Campbell: "It's about raising expectations."

OFFENSE

The biggest offseason news for the Lions might've been that offensive coordinator Ben Johnson was staying put, pulling his name out of the running for head-coaching vacancies in Carolina, Indianapolis and Houston. Johnson, 36, had emerged as a top candidate after an impressive play-calling debut with an offense that finished in the top five in scoring and yardage while committing the fewest turnovers (15) in the NFL.

His ability to get the most out of veteran quarterback Jared Goff was a big reason, utilizing more pre-snap motion and a heavy dose of play-action to increase his efficiency.

Goff was plagued by turnover woes early in his second season in Detroit but played arguably his best football after that, throwing 17 touchdowns and just one interception as the Lions went 8-2 down the stretch. Goff finished with his best passing numbers (4,438 yards, 29 TDs) since 2018, when he led the Rams to a Super Bowl. And with two years left on his deal, he'll be in line for an extension soon.

He's still insulated by a dominant offensive line anchored by Pro Bowl center Frank Ragnow and the tackle tandem of Penei Sewell and Taylor Decker. Jonah Jackson is due for a big payday at left guard, and the Lions brought back Graham Glasgow as insurance at right guard, where Halapoulivaati Vaitai missed last season with a back injury.

The Lions' diverse run scheme won't change, but the personnel will after replacing Jamaal Williams with a younger, more versatile lead back in David Montgomery, who started for the division-rival Bears the past four years. He'll be joined by rookie Jahmyr Gibbs, a dynamic rookie speedster drafted 12th overall to replace D'Andre Swift, whom the Lions promptly traded to Philadelphia.

The new backfield should give Goff even more help in the passing game, and that'll be important early as the Lions go without Jameson Williams, last year's first-round wideout who missed most of his rookie season rehabbing a torn ACL. He will miss the first six games this fall after being suspended for violating the league's gambling policy. The Lions do have other weapons, including Goff's favorite target, Amon-Ra St. Brown, who tied an NFL record with 196 catches his first two seasons. Along with Josh Reynolds and Kalif Raymond, the Lions also brought back Marvin Jones Jr., who spent his prime years in Detroit before playing the past two in Jacksonville.

The tight end room took a hit last October when the Lions traded T.J. Hockenson to Minnesota before the bill came due on a second contract for the

former top-10 pick. But that group added a new No. 1 in the draft in Iowa's Sam LaPorta, a catch-and-run threat taken 34th overall. He'll vault past holdovers Brock Wright and James Mitchell on the depth chart, but the Lions could use more 12 personnel this season.

DEFENSE

The final numbers didn't tell the full story for the Lions' defense in 2022. Detroit ranked 29th against the run and 30th against the pass and allowed a league-worst 82 plays of 20 yards or more. But the second-half improvements were notable from a unit that featured four rookie starters.

Aidan Hutchinson and James Houston combined for 17.5 sacks and finished 1-2 among the NFL's rookie leaders. Hutchinson, the No. 2 overall pick, was as relentless as advertised, and his 958 snaps were second only to the Raiders' Maxx Crosby among all defensive linemen. Houston's eight sacks came in only seven games with his raw, unorthodox style. Another rookie pass rusher, Josh Paschal, also emerged late and should split time with John Cominsky, who re-signed after a career year. The team lost all five games he missed with a broken hand last fall. There are still questions about the run defense and the interior of the line, but Alim McNeill thrived late as a 3-technique alongside Isaiah Buggs.

Rookie linebacker Malcolm Rodriguez quickly became a starter and fan favorite with his hard-hitting style. But he'll see a reduced role after the Lions re-signed Alex Anzalone to continue calling the shots in the middle and then invested a first-round pick in Iowa's Jack Campbell, who adds more size and coverage ability as an off-ball starter.

Holmes, the team's general manager, made his biggest free-agent splashes in the secondary, signing Pittsburgh's Cameron Sutton to a multiyear deal and adding the 49ers' Emmanuel Moseley at a discount (one year, $6 million) coming off an ACL injury. They're the projected starters on the outside, while C.J. Gardner-Johnson, who began his career in New Orleans with Lions defensive coordinator Aaron Glenn, was brought in as a chess piece at nickel corner and safety. So was Brian Branch, a versatile favorite of Nick Saban's at Alabama whom the Lions took in the second round of the draft. Kerby Joseph impressed as a ballhawk at free safety as a rookie last season, while Tracy Walker III is expected to be ready to fill the other starter's role after missing 2022 with a torn Achilles.

LON HORWEDEL-USA TODAY SPORTS

SPECIALISTS

The Lions have cycled through 10 kickers since they let Matt Prater walk in free agency two years ago. But they found some stability with an early-season signing of Michael Badgley, who made 20-of-24 field-goal attempts and all 33 of his PATs before re-upping on a one-year deal in the offseason.

They're set at punter with Jack Fox just beginning a four-year extension that made him one of the league's highest-paid at his position. In addition to flipping the field, he's also a weapon on fake punts with his arm, and the Lions — led by an aggressive special-teams coach in Dave Fipp — have converted six fakes over the past two seasons.

The return units were among the NFL's best, with Raymond (his 13.2 yards per return ranked among the best in the league) on punt returns and Justin Jackson ranking fourth on kickoff returns. Williams' suspension takes him out of the mix for kickoff return duty to start the season, but Gibbs could play a role there.

FINAL ANALYSIS

Few teams will begin the 2023 season with more hype than the Lions. But after sending Aaron Rodgers and Green Bay packing in a prime-time finale in January, they're convinced they're ready for the spotlight. The offense should be one of the league's best again, and Holmes' offseason work added more playmaking talent on defense. And with Dan Campbell's aggressive, no-nonsense approach taking hold in the locker room, there's no reason this team shouldn't end the NFC's longest playoff drought.

2022 RESULTS (9-8)

Sept.	11	Philadelphia	L	35-38
Sept.	18	Washington	W	36-27
Sept.	25	at Minnesota	L	24-28
Oct.	2	Seattle	L	45-48
Oct.	9	at New England	L	0-29
Oct.	23	at Dallas	L	6-24
Oct.	30	Miami	L	27-31
Nov.	6	Green Bay	W	15-9
Nov.	13	at Chicago	W	31-30
Nov.	20	at N.Y. Giants	W	31-18
Nov.	24	Buffalo	L	25-28
Dec.	4	Jacksonville	W	40-14
Dec.	11	Minnesota	W	34-23
Dec.	18	at N.Y. Jets	W	20-17
Dec.	24	at Carolina	L	23-37
Jan.	1	at Chicago	W	41-10
Jan.	8	at Green Bay	W	20-16

2022 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	380.0	4	2
Rushing	128.2	11	8
Passing	251.8	8	3
Scoring	26.6	5	3
Third Down %	40.8	14	7
EPA/Play	0.073	6	3
TO Differential	+7	T4	4

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	392.4	32	16
Rushing	146.5	29	14
Passing	245.8	30	15
Scoring	25.1	T28	T13
Interceptions	12	T19	9
Sacks	39	T19	9
EPA/Play	0.084	31	15

2022 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Jared Goff	587	382	4,438	29	7

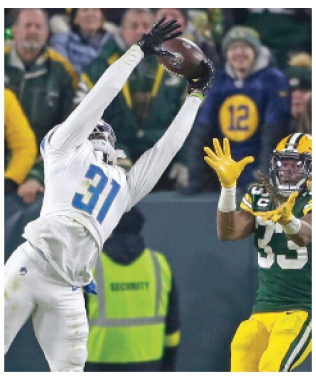
RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Jamaal Williams	262	1,066	4.1	17
D'Andre Swift	99	542	5.5	5
Justin Jackson	42	170	4.0	1

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Amon-Ra St. Brown	106	1,161	11.0	6
D'Andre Swift	48	389	8.1	3
Kalif Raymond	47	616	13.1	0
Josh Reynolds	38	479	12.6	3
DJ Chark Jr.	30	502	16.7	3
T.J. Hockenson	26	395	15.2	3

KICKING: Michael Badgley, 20-24 FGs, 33-33 PAT, 93 points
TACKLES: Alex Anzalone, 125; DeShon Elliott, 96
SACKS: Aidan Hutchinson, 9.5; James Houston, 8.0
INTERCEPTIONS: Kerby Joseph, 4; Aidan Hutchinson, 3

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

GOOD RIDDANCE Aaron Rodgers owned the NFC North for much of his career in Green Bay. But the Lions got the last laugh in 2022, sweeping the Packers and eliminating them from the playoffs in Week 18. No one had more fun than rookie safety **Kerby Joseph**, who became the first player ever to intercept Rodgers three times in a season. (Rodgers threw only nine INTs combined in his other 24 games against Detroit.) The last of Joseph's picks came on Rodgers' final pass attempt in the season finale at Lambeau Field. "If that's his last pass, I'm saving that ball and I'm going to send it to him so he can sign it," Joseph said afterward. "And if he comes back, more plays for me."



REVVED UP Detroit would love to repeat Kansas City's rare feat of hosting the NFL Draft as the defending Super Bowl champion. But while the Lions will try to do their part, local officials are eager to showcase the Motor City when it holds the 2024 event next April. "Our objective is to introduce hundreds of thousands of people across America to what's happening in Detroit today," Mayor Mike Duggan said. "We keep making these national rankings as the hottest place to visit, but nothing will turn the corner for us like 400- or 500,000 people going home and saying to their friends and family, 'You gotta look at this.'"

FASHION FORWARD The Lions are working with Nike to overhaul their uniform design for the first time since 2017, but they won't unveil the new look — one that includes revamped alternate uniforms — until the 2024 season, team president Rod Wood says. They are breaking out new alternate helmets this season, however, which will be worn with the outgoing all-gray jerseys and pants.

FRIENDS AND FOES The Lions and Giants were the two most improved teams in the NFC a year ago. They'll test each other to start the preseason in August, holding joint practices in Allen Park ahead of their exhibition opener in Detroit.

SCOUTING THE LIONS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP DETROIT "The Lions nailed the Aidan Hutchinson pick. Talk about an instant impact. He was as advertised. … John Cominsky is one gritty dude. To be as tough and stout as he is at the point of attack, it's special. … Malcolm Rodriguez is a big hitter; he really plays the game the right way. … I like the Jack Campbell pick, though he went a bit higher than he needed to. That doesn't take away from how good he is as a tall, active off-the-ball linebacker. … With Alex Anzalone, Rodriguez and Campbell, they're stacked at linebacker. … Kerby Joseph was a problem for quarterbacks last season. He has a real nose for the football. … Dan Campbell and Brad Holmes are giving Detroit hope. They're not a team people look forward to playing against anymore. … Jared Goff, initially seen as a joke after being traded from the Rams for Matthew Stafford, might be the right guy to lead Detroit through a rebuild. … The Jahmyr Gibbs selection and D'Andre Swift trade were really interesting. Love Gibbs' moves and all-around skills as a lead back. Swift hadn't played at the same level for a while now. They moved on at the right time while Swift still had some value. … Amon-Ra St. Brown has some of the best hands in the entire NFL. … What Detroit has done building through the offensive line is good drafting and advanced planning. I know some teams dinged Sam LaPorta for injuries, but we had a solid medical grade on him. He should plug right in for them."

WM. GLASHEEN/USA TODAY SPORTS

2023 LIONS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS.	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
16 Goff, Jared	QB	6-4	217	7	California	T-LAR-21	D1-LAR-16
10 Sudfeld, Nate	QB	6-6	227	6	Indiana	FA-22	D6-Was-16

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
45 Cabinda, Jason	FB	6-1	238	5	Penn State	FA-19	FA-LV-18
28 Jefferson, Jermar	RB	5-10	212	2	Oregon State	D7-21	D7-Det-21
5 Montgomery, David	RB	5-11	224	4	Iowa State	FA-Chi-23	D3-Chi-19
46 Reynolds, Craig	RB	5-11	216	3	Kutztown	FA-21	FA-Was-19

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
15 Alexander, Maurice	WR	5-11	180	1	FIU	FA-22	FA-Det-22
19 Benson, Trinity	WR	6-0	187	2	East Central	T-Den-21	FA-Den-19
48 Deese, Derrick	TE	6-4	235	1	San José State	FA-23	FA-Det-22
0 Jones Jr., Marvin	WR	6-2	199	11	California	FA-Jac-23	D5-Cin-12
85 Kennedy, Tom	WR	5-10	195	2	Bryant	FA-19	FA-Det-19
82 Mitchell, James	TE	6-4	249	1	Virginia Tech	D5-22	D5-Det-22
11 Raymond, Kalif	WR	5-8	180	6	Holy Cross	FA-Ten-21	FA-Den-16
8 Reynolds, Josh	WR	6-3	194	6	Texas A&M	W-Ten-21	D4a-LAR-17
14 St. Brown, Amon-Ra	WR	6-0	202	2	USC	D4a-21	D4a-Det-21
9 Williams, Jameson	WR	6-1	180	1	Alabama	D1b-22	D1b-Det-22
89 Wright, Brock	TE	6-5	255	2	Notre Dame	FA-21	FA-Det-21
84 Zylstra, Shane	TE	6-4	239	2	Minnesota State	FA-21	FA-Min-21

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
74 Awosika, Kayode	G	6-3	312	2	Buffalo	FA-22	FA-Phi-21
68 Decker, Taylor	T	6-7	320	7	Ohio State	D1-16	D1-Det-16
65 Eze, Obinna	T	6-8	325	1	TCU	FA-22	FA-Det-22
60 Glasgow, Graham	G	6-6	310	7	Michigan	FA-Den-23	D3-Det-16
73 Jackson, Jonah	G	6-4	311	3	Ohio State	D3b-20	D3b-Det-20
67 Nelson, Matt	T	6-7	318	3	Iowa	FA-19	FA-Det-19
60 Paulo, Darrin	T	6-3	320	1	Utah	FA-22	FA-NO-20
66 Pierschbacher, Ross	G	6-4	315	3	Alabama	FA-22	D5-Was-19
77 Ragnow, Frank	C	6-5	309	5	Arkansas	D1-18	D1-Det-18
58 Sewell, Penei	T	6-5	335	2	Oregon	D1-21	D1-Det-21
71 Stenberg, Logan	G	6-6	312	3	Kentucky	D4-20	D4-Det-20
72 Vaitai, Halapoulivaati	G	6-6	328	7	TCU	FA-Phi-20	D5b-Phi-16

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
96 Buggs, Isaiah	DL	6-3	295	3	Alabama	FA-22	D6-Pit-19
79 Cominsky, John	DL	6-5	285	4	Charleston (W.Va.)	W-Atl-22	D4b-Atl-19
Covington, Christian	DL	6-2	300	8	Rice	FA-LAC-23	D6b-Hou-15
53 Harris, Charles	DL	6-3	250	6	Missouri	FA-Atl-21	D1-Mia-17
59 Houston, James	DL	6-1	241	1	Jackson State	D6b-22	D6b-Det-22
97 Hutchinson, Aidan	DL	6-7	264	1	Michigan	D1a-22	D1a-Det-22
94 Jones, Benito	DL	6-1	318	2	Ole Miss	W-Mia-22	FA-Mia-20
54 McNeill, Alim	DL	6-2	325	2	NC State	D3a-21	D3a-Det-21
95 Okwara, Romeo	DL	6-4	255	7	Notre Dame	W-NYG-18	FA-NYG-16
91 Onwuzurike, Levi	DL	6-3	295	2	Washington	D2-21	D2-Det-21
93 Paschal, Josh	DL	6-3	274	1	Kentucky	D2-22	D2-Det-22
52 Taylor, Demetrius	DL	6-1	295	1	Appalachian State	FA-22	FA-Det-22

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
34 Anzalone, Alex	LB	6-3	237	6	Florida	FA-NO-21	D3b-NO-17
55 Barnes, Derrick	LB	6-0	238	2	Purdue	D4b-21	D4b-Det-21
99 Okwara, Julian	LB	6-4	239	3	Notre Dame	D3a-20	D3a-Det-20
57 Pittman, Anthony	LB	6-3	242	2	Wayne State	FA-19	FA-Det-19
42 Reeves-Maybin, Jalen	LB	6-1	230	6	Tennessee	FA-Hou-23	D4a-Det-17
44 Rodriguez, Malcolm	LB	5-11	230	1	Oklahoma State	D6a-22	D6a-Det-22

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
35 Breeze, Brady	S	6-0	200	2	Oregon	W-Ten-21	D6-Ten-21
30 Dorsey, Khalil	CB	5-9	181	2	Northern Arizona	FA-23	FA-Bal-20
2 Gardner-Johnson, C.J.	S	5-11	210	4	Florida	FA-Phi-23	D4-NO-19
25 Harris, Will	CB	6-1	206	4	Boston College	D3-19	D3-Det-19
39 Jacobs, Jerry	CB	5-11	203	2	Arkansas	FA-21	FA-Det-21
31 Joseph, Kerby	S	6-1	203	1	Illinois	D3-22	D3-Det-22
36 Lucas, Chase	CB	5-11	184	1	Arizona State	D7-22	D7-Det-22
26 Melifonwu, Ifeatu	S	6-3	210	2	Syracuse	D3b-21	D3b-Det-21
4 Moseley, Emmanuel	CB	5-11	190	5	Tennessee	FA-SF-23	FA-SF-18
23 Smith, Saivion	CB	6-1	190	3	Alabama	FA-23	FA-Jac-19
1 Sutton, Cameron	CB	5-11	188	6	Tennessee	FA-Pit-23	D3a-Pit-17
21 Walker III, Tracy	S	6-1	206	5	Louisiana	D3-18	D3-Det-18
33 Williams, Jarren	CB	5-11	190	2	UAlbany	FA-22	FA-Ari-20

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
17 Badgley, Michael	K	5-10	183	5	Miami (Fla.)	FA-22	FA-Ind-18
47 Daly, Scott	LS	6-1	245	2	Notre Dame	FA-21	FA-Dal-18
3 Fox, Jack	P	6-2	215	3	Rice	FA-19	FA-KC-19
50 McQuaide, Jake	LS	6-2	238	12	Ohio State	FA-Dal-23	FA-LAR-11

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	0	Marvin Jones Jr.	9	Jameson Williams
WR	8	Josh Reynolds	19	Trinity Benson
WR	14	Amon-Ra St. Brown	11	Kalif Raymond
LT	68	Taylor Decker	65	Obinna Eze
LG	73	Jonah Jackson	71	Logan Stenberg
C	77	Frank Ragnow	66	Ross Pierschbacher
RG	72	Halapoulivaati Vaitai	60	Graham Glasgow
RT	58	Penei Sewell	67	Matt Nelson
TE	87	Sam LaPorta (R)	89	Brock Wright
QB	16	Jared Goff	10	Nate Sudfeld
RB	5	David Montgomery	26	Jahmyr Gibbs (R)

DEFENSE

DE	53	Charles Harris	59	James Houston
DL	79	John Cominsky	93	Josh Paschal
DL	54	Alim McNeill	96	Isaiah Buggs
DE	97	Aidan Hutchinson	95	Romeo Okwara
LB	46	Jack Campbell (R)	44	Malcolm Rodriguez
LB	34	Alex Anzalone	55	Derrick Barnes
CB	1	Cameron Sutton	25	Will Harris
CB	4	Emmanuel Moseley	39	Jerry Jacobs
NB	2	C.J. Gardner-Johnson	32	Brian Branch (R)
SS	31	Kerby Joseph	23	Saivion Smith
FS	21	Tracy Walker III	6	Ifeatu Melifonwu

SPECIALISTS

K	17	Michael Badgley	KR	11	Kalif Raymond
P	3	Jack Fox	PR	11	Kalif Raymond

5,282

Jared Goff was third in the league for effective yards with 5,282, ranking behind only Patrick Mahomes and Tom Brady, according to Football Outsiders.

LIONS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Jahmyr Gibbs	RB	5-11	200	Alabama
1.	Jack Campbell	LB	6-5	246	Iowa
2.	Sam LaPorta	TE	6-4	249	Iowa
2.	Brian Branch	DB	6-0	193	Alabama
3.	Hendon Hooker	QB	6-3	208	Tennessee
3.	Brodric Martin	DT	6-5	337	WKU
5.	Colby Sorsdal	OL	6-6	301	William & Mary
7.	Antoine Green	WR	6-2	201	North Carolina

Armed with the third-most draft capital entering the draft, the Lions' eschewed positional value to grab players they coveted early on. Jahmyr Gibbs was the among the biggest Day 1 surprises in the draft, but he made D'Andre Swift expendable. Jack Campbell was Iowa's heart-and-soul leader and is an athletic upgrade over Malcolm Rodriguez as a starting linebacker. Sam LaPorta is a capable blocker, and he'll help fill T.J. Hockenson's shoes with his seam-stretching ability as a pass-catcher. Brian Branch may have to wait his turn to be the Lions' starting nickel, but he'll be a core special-teams contributor on Day 1. Hendon Hooker's rookie season may be a redshirt year coming off an ACL tear, but he is the Lions' highest-drafted quarterback since Matthew Stafford in 2009.

GB PACKERS

NFC NORTH FORECAST **1**

2023 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 10	at Chicago	4:25
Sept. 17	at Atlanta	1:00
Sept. 24	New Orleans	1:00
Sept. 28	Detroit	8:15
Oct. 9	at Las Vegas	8:15
Oct. 15	BYE	
Oct. 22	at Denver	4:25
Oct. 29	Minnesota	1:00
Nov. 5	L.A. Rams	1:00
Nov. 12	at Pittsburgh	1:00
Nov. 19	L.A. Chargers	1:00
Nov. 23	at Detroit	12:30
Dec. 3	Kansas City	8:20
Dec. 11	at N.Y. Giants	8:15
Dec. 17	Tampa Bay	1:00
Dec. 24	at Carolina	1:00
Dec. 31	at Minnesota	8:20
Jan. 7	Chicago	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

THE COACHES

Head Coach: Matt LaFleur
Record With Team: 47-19
Career Record: 47-19
Offensive Coordinator: Adam Stenavich
Defensive Coordinator: Joe Barry
Assistant Head Coach/Special Teams Coordinator: Rich Bisaccia
Quarterbacks: Tom Clements
Running Backs: Ben Sirmans
Wide Receivers: Jason Vrable
Tight Ends: John Dunn
Offensive Line: Luke Butkus
Defensive Line/Running Game Coordinator: Jerry Montgomery
Passing Game Coordinator (Defense): Greg Williams
Pass Rush Specialist: Jason Rebrovich
Inside Linebackers: Kirk Olivadotti
Outside Linebackers: Mike Smith
Defensive Backs: Ryan Downard

Brian Gutekunst doesn't have a crystal ball, but the Green Bay Packers general manager does have a vision for what the Packers' Jordan Love-led offense will look like in the future.

He has selected eight — eight! — would-be pass catchers over the past two drafts: Wide receivers Christian Watson, Romeo Doubs and Samori Touré in 2022, and tight ends Luke Musgrave and Tucker Kraft and wide receivers Jayden Reed, Dontayvion Wicks and Grant DuBose in April.

So with the team segueing at quarterback from four-time NFL MVP and surefire Pro Football Hall of Famer Aaron Rodgers to Love, the 2020 first-round pick Gutekunst traded up to make, Gutekunst's hope is that Love and his myriad of young skill-position weapons go through the ups and downs of inexperience together — and come out the other side as cornerstones of another Super Bowl contender, like the Packers were each year with Brett Favre and Rodgers at quarterback over the past three decades.

"That's a little bit of the idea, right?" Gutekunst said. "I think that's important, for those guys to grow together.

"We took some guys last year that really did a nice job in their first year. We're excited for their growth. So now, I think we have a good nucleus of guys, pass catchers to be able to grow with the quarterback. I think that's important. And we'll see how it goes."

Head coach Matt LaFleur, meanwhile, went out of his way during the annual NFL Meetings in March to tamp down expectations for Love, whose 10-snap cameo in a late-November loss at Philadelphia is really the only hard evidence that Love can perform well in a game that counts.

"Certainly, I think we're fooling ourselves if we think he's going to go out there and perform at a level to the likes of an Aaron Rodgers," LaFleur said of Love. "It's going to be a progression. … I think we all have to temper our expectations for him. It's different when you're going into a game vs. when you're starting a game. It's going to be a process, but it's going to be exciting for him (and) for us."

OFFENSE

In back-to-back offseasons, the Packers have moved on from players who Gutekunst believes are both Pro Football Hall of Famers-to-be: Rodgers this past offseason, and wide receiver Davante Adams a year earlier. It's hard to imagine an offense in the league going through a greater personnel sea change than that.

Turning the offense over to Love, who has played 157 career regular-season snaps, could mean a return to the core tenets of the Kyle Shanahan-Sean McVay-LaFleur offense, as LaFleur gave Rodgers all kinds of leeway within the system. LaFleur jokes that the No. 1 question he was asked throughout the offseason was whether he was excited to run "his" offense, instead of the Rodgers-LaFleur hybrid of his first four seasons as head coach.

"The way I always view it, it's our offense," LaFleur says. "Obviously, you want to do whatever accentuates your players' abilities. I do think there's a comfort factor with the quarterback. I've always said it: I believe it's the hardest position to play in all of sports. You want that guy to feel comfortable and confident in whatever play is going in there. Because if you get good quarterback play, you've got a pretty good chance of winning games."

Look for the Packers to lean on the backfield tandem of Aaron Jones and AJ Dillon, who combined for 1,891 rushing yards and 14 total touchdowns last season. While the Packers may not be as run-heavy as the 2018 Tennessee Titans — with Derrick Henry in the backfield, uncertainty at quarterback and LaFleur calling the offensive plays — there'll surely be a greater emphasis on the run.

The team will also cross its fingers that its offensive line stays healthy after last year's constant shuffling. Left tackle David Bakhtiari seems to be past his knee issues, and left guard Elgton Jenkins, who signed a lucrative extension late in the year, has returned to form. At the other three spots, LaFleur has ample options, including staying with Yosh Nijman at right tackle, Jon Runyan at right guard and Josh Myers at center.

The real question is how quickly Love and his young tight ends and receivers can get on the same page. Incredibly, with a host of veteran departures at both positions, Watson, Doubs and Touré were the three most experienced receivers on the roster when organized team activity practices kicked off in May.

"That's going to be interesting to work through. There is a ton of youth," LaFleur admits. "It's going to be interesting to see how much we can really put on these guys' plates."

DEFENSE

After investing yet another first-round pick on defense — Gutekunst has made eight first-round picks as GM, and Iowa edge rusher Lukas Van Ness is the seventh defender in that group — defensive coordinator Joe Barry's group is on notice: It has to be a top-flight unit after not living up to expectations last year.

"Expectations are high," Gutekunst acknowledges. "I sat here last year and said the same thing. I think we had really good moments (on defense) last year, but the consistency has to be better. ... We put a lot of investment into that group and there are high expectations there."

Up front, Kenny Clark remains the anchor, but with the group's offseason defections, younger players like 2022 first-round pick Devonte Wyatt, T.J. Slaton and rookie fourth-round pick Colby Wooden must step up.

On the edge, with top pass rusher Rashan Gary coming off an ACL tear, the unit will count on veteran Preston Smith and Van Ness, although two players who emerged late last season (Justin Hollins, Kingsley Enagbare) could provide a huge lift if they make meaningful jumps.

While getting ejected from two games besmirched his rookie season, first-round pick Quay Walker showed versatility and talent but must control his emotions. De'Vondre Campbell, outstanding in 2021, was injured and inconsistent and must return to form.

In the back end, the Packers love their cornerback group (Jaire Alexander, Rasul Douglas, Eric Stokes, Keisean Nixon), but the safety position is in flux. Even 2019 first-round pick Darnell Savage Jr., who was benched for a time last year, is a question mark.

SPECIALISTS

Having bid farewell to franchise scoring leader Mason Crosby, the Packers plan to cast their lot with sixth-round pick Anders Carlson, their first rookie kicker since Crosby was a sixth-round pick in 2007. Carlson will benefit from having veteran punter Pat O'Donnell on board to serve as his holder and one of the NFL's best special teams coordinators, Rich Bisaccia, in charge. Opponents will attempt to avoid kicking to Nixon, a first-team All-Pro last year who led the NFL in returns of more than 50 yards (five).

FINAL ANALYSIS

While Gutekunst insists the team isn't rebuilding, he said the Rodgers trade was a "good day for the Packers, a good day for the Jets." He was excited to swallow all $40.3 million in dead cap money from Rodgers' contract this year and clear the decks of all future fiscal obligations to Rodgers. But in a weak NFC North, a team in rebuilding mode could also sneak into the postseason. That's a realistic goal.

ERIC HARTLINE-USA TODAY SPORTS

2022 RESULTS (8-9)

Sept.	11	at Minnesota	L	7-23
Sept.	18	Chicago	W	27-10
Sept.	25	at Tampa Bay	W	14-12
Oct.	2	New England (ot)	W	27-24
Oct.	9	vs. N.Y. Giants	L	22-27
Oct.	16	N.Y. Jets	L	10-27
Oct.	23	at Washington	L	21-23
Oct.	30	at Buffalo	L	17-27
Nov.	6	at Detroit	L	9-15
Nov.	13	Dallas (ot)	W	31-28
Nov.	17	Tennessee	L	17-27
Nov.	27	at Philadelphia	L	33-40
Dec.	4	at Chicago	W	28-19
Dec.	19	L.A. Rams	W	24-12
Dec.	25	at Miami	W	26-20
Jan.	1	Minnesota	W	41-17
Jan.	8	Detroit	L	16-20

2022 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	337.9	17	8
Rushing	124.3	15	10
Passing	213.6	17	8
Scoring	21.8	14	7
Third Down %	39.5	17	9
EPA/Play	0.017	11	6
TO Differential	+2	T12	T6

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	336.5	17	7
Rushing	139.5	26	12
Passing	197.0	6	4
Scoring	21.8	T17	T7
Interceptions	17	T4	T2
Sacks	34	T27	14
EPA/Play	0.033	27	12

2022 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Aaron Rodgers	542	350	3,695	26	12
Jordan Love	21	14	195	1	0

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Aaron Jones	213	1,121	5.3	2
AJ Dillon	186	770	4.1	7

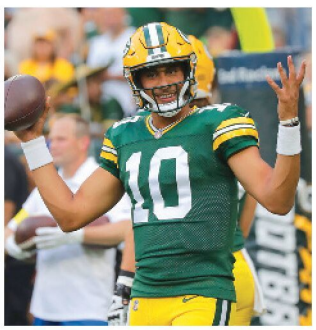
RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Allen Lazard	60	788	13.1	6
Aaron Jones	59	395	6.7	5
Robert Tonyan	53	470	8.9	2
Romeo Doubs	42	425	10.1	3
Christian Watson	41	611	14.9	7
Randall Cobb	34	417	12.3	1

KICKING: Mason Crosby, 25-29 FGs, 37-39 PAT, 112 points
TACKLES: Quay Walker, 121; Adrian Amos, 102
SACKS: Preston Smith, 8.5; Rashan Gary, 6.0
INTERCEPTIONS: Jaire Alexander, 5; Rasul Douglas, 4

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

LESS STRESS TUESDAYS With **Jordan Love** at quarterback instead of Aaron Rodgers, the Packers won't have to nervously wait each Tuesday to hear what controversy gets stirred up on "The Pat McAfee Show," where Rodgers is a regular guest and often aired his grievances against the organization.

DUBOSE DELIVERS ... TO YOUR CAR



If you're looking for a new Packer to root for, seventh-round pick Grant DuBose is deserving. When the COVID-19 pandemic shut down Miles College's 2020 season, DuBose went home to Alabama and worked three part-time jobs — one of which was for Walmart, loading groceries into online shoppers' cars. "I was OGP — online grocery pickup," explains DuBose, who transferred to Charlotte in 2021. "Just trying to keep the dream alive."

IN THEIR MEMORY Rookie wide receiver Dontayvion Wicks will be playing not only for himself, but also for former Virginia teammates D'Sean Perry, Lavel Davis Jr. and Devin Chandler, who were killed in a November campus shooting. The NFL honored them before the draft began in April, making them the honorary first picks in the draft. Wicks plans to honor them with his play. "Knowing that they wanted to be in this position that I'm in, I was close with them, so (I'm) doing this for them," Wicks says. "I know they're watching me. So, I'm going to work as hard as I can every day, and continue to use that as a drive and a motivation to be the best I can be.

CASHING IN While rookie tight end Tucker Kraft's first NFL contract will pay him handsomely, the South Dakota State Jackrabbit passed on what he said would have been "six-figure" NIL deals to leave his FCS school for Power 5 programs. "At one point, I was just a single click away from entering the portal and going to the SEC to play football," he says. "It was hard, being still in college and turning down hundreds of thousands of dollars. But after talking to coaches, those are pennies on the dollar compared to what I could make in my rookie contract."

SCOUTING THE PACKERS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP GREEN BAY "The Jordan Love era officially starts now. Love's one-year extension was sensible. It's good business to lower his salary-cap hit and show the locker room that the organization views him as valuable. … It was time for this divorce. Aaron Rodgers wasn't communicating with the front office, and the relationship had run its course. … Love remains unproven. He has a lot of tools, though, as far as arm strength and has been preparing for a long time for this moment. … David Bakhtiari's knee has been an issue for the past few years, raising the question of when the team may need to start looking for a replacement. … Elgton Jenkins is special as an interior lineman with his combination of power and quickness. … With Christian Watson and Romeo Doubs, these young receivers could actually benefit from Rodgers' departure. Rodgers was very heavy-handed and critical at times of younger players. … One backstop for the Green Bay offense: run the football behind Aaron Jones and AJ Dillon. Dillon's tackle-breaking ability is incredible. … The comeback for Rashan Gary from the injury is pivotal to the defensive outlook. … For my money, Jaire Alexander is as good of a pure cover corner as anyone in the league. … Kenny Clark is one tough blocking assignment. … One edge the Packers have: sharp play-calling with Matt LaFleur."

DAN POWERS/USA TODAY SPORTS

2023 PACKERS VETERAN ROSTER

	QUARTERBACKS	POS.	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
19	Etling, Danny	QB	6-3	220	1	LSU	FA-21	D7-NE-18
10	Love, Jordan	QB	6-4	219	3	Utah State	D1-20	D1-GB-20
	RUNNING BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
28	Dillon, AJ	RB	6-0	247	3	Boston College	D2-20	D2-GB-20
39	Goodson, Tyler	RB	5-9	197	1	Iowa	FA-22	FA-GB-22
33	Jones, Aaron	RB	5-9	208	6	UTEP	D5b-17	D5b-GB-17
27	Taylor, Patrick	RB	6-2	217	2	Memphis	FA-20	FA-GB-20
	RECEIVERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
49	Allen, Austin	TE	6-8	253	1	Nebraska	FA-23	FA-NYG-22
82	Cotton, Jeff	WR	6-2	206	1	Idaho	FA-22	FA-LAC-20
84	Davis, Tyler	TE	6-4	252	3	Georgia Tech	PS-Ind-21	D6-Jac-20
81	Deguara, Josiah	TE	6-2	238	3	Cincinnati	D3-20	D3-GB-20
87	Doubs, Romeo	WR	6-2	204	1	Nevada	D4a-22	D4a-GB-22
46	Guggemos, Nick	TE	6-5	247	1	St. Thomas	FA-22	FA-Sea-21
80	Melton, Bo	WR	5-11	189	1	Rutgers	PS-Sea-22	D7-Sea-22
83	Touré, Samori	WR	6-1	191	1	Nebraska	D7d-22	D7d-GB-22
9	Watson, Christian	WR	6-4	208	1	North Dakota St.	D2-22	D2-GB-22
	OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
69	Bakhtiari, David	T	6-4	310	10	Colorado	D4a-13	D4a-GB-13
79	Delance, Jean	T	6-4	303	1	Florida	FA-22	FA-Chi-22
67	Hanson, Jake	C/G	6-4	296	2	Oregon	D6b-20	D6b-GB-20
74	Jenkins, Elgton	G/T	6-5	311	4	Mississippi State	D2-19	D2-GB-19
72	Jones, Caleb	T	6-9	370	1	Indiana	FA-22	FA-GB-22
71	Myers, Josh	C/G	6-5	310	2	Ohio State	D2-21	D2-GB-21
70	Newman, Royce	G/T	6-5	310	2	Ole Miss	D4-21	D4-GB-21
73	Nijman, Yosh	T	6-7	314	3	Virginia Tech	FA-19	FA-GB-19
75	Rhyan, Sean	T/G	6-5	321	1	UCLA	D3-22	D3-GB-22
76	Runyan, Jon	G	6-4	307	3	Michigan	D6a-20	D6a-GB-20
78	Tenuta, Luke	T	6-8	314	1	Virginia Tech	W-Ind-22	D6-Buf-22
50	Tom, Zach	OL	6-4	304	1	Wake Forest	D4b-22	D4b-GB-22
63	Walker, Rasheed	T	6-6	324	1	Penn State	D7c-22	D7c-GB-22
	DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
97	Clark, Kenny	DL	6-3	314	7	UCLA	D1-16	D1-GB-16
99	Ford, Jonathan	DL	6-5	338	1	Miami (Fla.)	D7b-22	D7b-GB-22
93	Slaton, T.J.	DL	6-4	330	2	Florida	D5a-21	D5a-GB-21
98	Slayton, Chris	DL	6-4	307	1	Syracuse	W-SF-22	D7-NYG-19
95	Wyatt, Devonte	DL	6-3	304	1	Georgia	D1b-22	D1b-GB-22
	LINEBACKERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
59	Campbell, De'Vondre	LB	6-3	232	7	Minnesota	FA-21	D4-Atl-16
55	Enagbare, Kingsley	LB	6-4	258	1	South Carolina	D5-22	D5-GB-22
53	Garvin, Jonathan	LB	6-4	257	3	Miami (Fla.)	D7b-20	D7b-GB-20
52	Gary, Rashan	LB	6-5	277	4	Michigan	D1a-19	D1a-GB-19
54	Hamilton, La'Darius	LB	6-2	261	2	North Texas	PS-TB-21	FA-Dal-20
47	Hollins, Justin	LB	6-5	248	4	Oregon	W-LAR-22	D5-Den-19
58	McDuffie, Isaiah	LB	6-1	227	2	Boston College	D6b-21	D6b-GB-21
91	Smith, Preston	LB	6-5	265	8	Mississippi State	FA-Was-19	D2-Was-15
7	Walker, Quay	LB	6-4	241	1	Georgia	D1a-22	D1a-GB-22
45	Wilson, Eric	LB	6-1	230	6	Cincinnati	PS-NO-22	FA-Min-17
	DEFENSIVE BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
23	Alexander, Jaire	CB	5-10	196	5	Louisville	D1-18	D1-GB-18
35	Ballentine, Corey	CB	5-11	196	4	Washburn	FA-22	D6-NYG-19
24	Carpenter, Tariq	S	6-3	230	1	Georgia Tech	D7a-22	D7a-GB-22
29	Douglas, Rasul	CB	6-2	209	6	West Virginia	PS-Ari-21	D3-Phi-17
20	Ford, Rudy	S	6-0	210	6	Auburn	FA-22	D6-Ari-17
40	Ford, Tyrell	CB	5-11	188	1	Waterloo	FA-23	FA-GB-23
41	Franklin, Benjie	CB	6-0	172	1	Tarleton State	FA-23	FA-Jac-22
38	Gaines, Innis	S	6-2	215	1	TCU	FA-21	FA-GB-21
22	Jean-Charles, Shemar	CB	5-10	184	2	Appalachian State	D5b-21	D5b-GB-21
6	Leavitt, Dallin	S	5-10	195	4	Utah State	FA-22	FA-LV-18
30	Moore, Tarvarius	S	6-2	200	5	Southern Miss	FA-SF-23	D3b-SF-18
25	Nixon, Keisean	CB	5-10	200	4	South Carolina	FA-LV-22	FA-LV-19
26	Savage Jr., Darnell	S	5-11	198	4	Maryland	D1b-19	D1b-GB-19
21	Stokes, Eric	CB	6-0	194	2	Georgia	D1-21	D1-GB-21
43	Thomas, Kiondre	CB	6-0	185	1	Kansas State	FA-22	FA-Cle-21
34	Wiggins, James	S	5-11	209	1	Cincinnati	FA-23	D7a-Ari-21
	SPECIALISTS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
56	Coco, Jack	LS	6-2	248	1	Georgia Tech	FA-22	FA-GB-22
16	O'Donnell, Pat	P	6-4	220	9	Miami (Fla.)	FA-Chi-22	D6b-Chi-14
42	Orzech, Matt	LS	6-3	245	3	Azusa Pacific	FA-LAR-23	FA-Bal-19
48	White, Parker	K	6-4	207	1	South Carolina	FA-23	FA-GB-23

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	9	Christian Watson	13	Dontayvion Wicks (R)
WR	87	Romeo Doubs	86	Grant DuBose (R)
WR	11	Jayden Reed (R)	83	Samori Touré
LT	69	David Bakhtiari	50	Zach Tom
LG	74	Elgton Jenkins	75	Sean Rhyan
C	71	Josh Myers	67	Jake Hanson
RG	76	Jon Runyan	70	Royce Newman
RT	73	Yosh Nijman	72	Caleb Jones
TE	88	Luke Musgrave (R)	85	Tucker Kraft (R)
QB	10	Jordan Love	8	Sean Clifford (R)
RB	33	Aaron Jones	28	AJ Dillon

DEFENSE

DE	93	T.J. Slaton	96	Colby Wooden (R)
NT	97	Kenny Clark	99	Jonathan Ford
DE	95	Devonte Wyatt	98	Chris Slayton
OLB	91	Preston Smith	55	Kingsley Enagbare
ILB	59	De'Vondre Campbell	58	Isaiah McDuffie
ILB	7	Quay Walker	45	Eric Wilson
OLB	52	Rashan Gary	90	Lukas Van Ness
CB	23	Jaire Alexander	21	Eric Stokes
CB	29	Rasul Douglas	25	Keisean Nixon
SS	20	Rudy Ford	6	Dallin Leavitt
FS	26	Darnell Savage Jr.	36	Anthony Johnson Jr. (R)

SPECIALISTS

K	17	Anders Carlson (R)	KR	25	Keisean Nixon
P	16	Pat O'Donnell	KR	25	Keisean Nixon

12

The Packers' inexperienced pass catchers had only 12 combined broken tackles on receptions; only the Bills (11), Seahawks (11) and Falcons (seven) had fewer last season.

PACKERS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B+

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Lukas Van Ness	DE	6-5	272	Iowa
2.	Luke Musgrave	TE	6-6	253	Oregon State
2.	Jayden Reed	WR	5-11	187	Michigan State
3.	Tucker Kraft	TE	6-5	259	South Dakota St.
4.	Colby Wooden	DT	6-4	273	Auburn
5.	Sean Clifford	QB	6-2	218	Penn State
5.	Dontayvion Wicks	WR	6-1	206	Virginia
6.	Karl Brooks	DE	6-3	296	Bowling Green
6.	Anders Carlson	K	6-5	219	Auburn
7.	Carrington Valentine	CB	6-0	189	Kentucky
7.	Lew Nichols III	RB	5-10	220	Central Michigan
7.	Anthony Johnson Jr.	S	6-0	205	Iowa State
7.	Grant DuBose	WR	6-2	201	Charlotte

Adding Luke Musgrave, Tucker Kraft, Jayden Reed, Dontayvion Wicks and Grant DuBose in the mix filled pass-catching voids, but the team had lots of other needs and managed to check off almost every box. Lukas Van Ness should bolster the edge rush immediately, and Colby Wooden and Karl Brooks bring a desperately needed defensive line depth charge. Anders Carlson will be under the microscope replacing the franchise's all-time leading scorer, while Anthony Johnson Jr. is the sleeper of the draft.

MIN VIKINGS

NFC NORTH FORECAST **3**

2023 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 10	Tampa Bay	1:00
Sept. 14	at Philadelphia	8:15
Sept. 24	L.A. Chargers	1:00
Oct. 1	at Carolina	1:00
Oct. 8	Kansas City	4:25
Oct. 15	at Chicago	1:00
Oct. 23	San Francisco	8:15
Oct. 29	at Green Bay	1:00
Nov. 5	at Atlanta	1:00
Nov. 12	New Orleans	1:00
Nov. 19	at Denver	8:20
Nov. 27	Chicago	8:15
Dec. 3	BYE	
Dec. 10	at Las Vegas	4:05
Dec. 17	at Cincinnati	4:05
Dec. 24	Detroit	1:00
Dec. 31	Green Bay	8:20
Jan. 7	at Detroit	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

THE COACHES

Head Coach: Kevin O'Connell
Record With Team: 13-4
Career Record: 13-4
Offensive Coordinator: Wes Phillips
Defensive Coordinator: Brian Flores
Special Teams Coordinator: Matt Daniels
Assistant Head Coach: Mike Pettine
Quarterbacks: Chris O'Hara
Running Backs/Running Game Coordinator: Curtis Modkins
Wide Receivers: Keenan McCardell
Tight Ends/Passing Game Coordinator: Brian Angelichio
Offensive Line: Chris Kuper
Defensive Line: Chris Rumph
Inside Linebackers: Mike Siravo
Outside Linebackers/Pass Rush Specialist: Mike Smith
Defensive Backs: Daronte Jones

The finest debut season by a Vikings head coach (13-4) wasn't good enough for Kevin O'Connell and a fan base that had higher expectations for a high-scoring team that was upset at home by the Giants in a one-and-done return to the playoffs last season.

So O'Connell wasted no time making a significant philosophical shift at the top of his defense, jettisoning coordinator Ed Donatell and his stubbornly soft-shell concepts in favor of Brian Flores, the former Dolphins head coach, Bill Belichick disciple and lover of man coverages, zero-blitz packages and all-around approach to pressuring quarterbacks.

Now, pressure falls on Flores to get much more out of a younger, more unproven unit after the cap-strapped Vikings said goodbye to their top cornerback (Patrick Peterson), best defensive lineman (Dalvin Tomlinson) and longtime leading tackler (Eric Kendricks) while also facing the likelihood of having to part ways with one of their top edge rushers (Za'Darius Smith) before camp starts.

"B-Flo and I, our foundation and philosophies are very, very similar," O'Connell says. "He shares the characteristics of my personality and how I want our team to be coached. B-Flo has a lot of different ways, week to week, of applying pressure to the offense."

OFFENSE

Kirk Cousins had a career-high 14 interceptions a year ago but also won more games and played the position better than he ever has. An NFL-record 11 of those victories came by eight points or fewer. Infinitely more comfortable with O'Connell as his head coach, play-caller and confidante, Cousins was more of a leader and risk-taker, which was rewarded often by All-Pro receiver Justin Jefferson's crazy catch radius and an offense that helped Cousins post a record-tying eight fourth-quarter comebacks, including the greatest in league history after trailing the Colts 33-0. Cousins now benefits from having the same system and play-caller in consecutive seasons for the first time since 2016. The Vikings also placed the proverbial chip on Cousins' shoulder by not extending his contract beyond this season nor hiding the fact they were interested in trading up to draft Anthony Richardson. In a sense, the Vikings chose to challenge Cousins to earn his next big contract rather than extend a guy who will be 35 this season and has only one playoff win in five seasons with the Vikings.

As adept as O'Connell's passing attack is, the young coach came out of Year 1 painfully aware of the need to boost a 27th-ranked run game that faltered too often in short-yardage situations. Blocking tight end Josh Oliver was a Day 1 signing in free agency. Alexander Mattison, a more powerful runner than Dalvin Cook, was re-signed and earmarked for the starting job as the Vikings headed into the summer prepared to part ways with Cook via trade or release.

Tight end T.J. Hockenson has a knack for always being open underneath. Underrated receiver K.J. Osborn, who has never whiffed in the clutch, steps in for the departed Adam Thielen as a better No. 2, while rookie first-round draft pick Jordan Addison should have an immediate impact in the three-receiver sets O'Connell often uses. But the offense revolves around Jefferson, who led the NFL in receptions (128) and yards (1,809) in just his third season.

The offensive line returns intact. Tackles Christian Darrisaw and Brian O'Neill can be elite bookends. The interior has struggled, but center Garrett Bradbury earned essentially a one-year prove-it extension after finally showing signs of improvement last year. And right guard Ed Ingram, the weak link as a

JEFFREY BECKER-USA TODAY SPORTS

rookie a year ago, should benefit from a year in an NFL weight room and the fact that he played every snap last season.

DEFENSE

Expect growing pains as Flores works with several key players who are young, unproven and injury-prone. Safety Lewis Cine, last year's first-round pick, played only two defensive snaps before a gruesome leg injury ended his season in Week 3. Of bigger concern now that he's on track physically is the fact he wasn't even close to winning the job before he was hurt. Cornerback Andrew Booth Jr., a second-round pick last year, entered the league with a history of injuries, suffered a torn meniscus and played sparingly in six games. Akayleb Evans, a fourth-round pick in 2022, outplayed Booth but then suffered three concussions in 10 games.

The Vikings added corners Byron Murphy Jr. and Joejuan Williams in free agency. Murphy, a fifth-year veteran with 48 career starts for the Cardinals, becomes the group's grizzled veteran at 25. He can shift into the slot in the nickel and hopefully can stay healthy after missing eight games with a back injury last year. Williams is a former second-round pick of the Patriots, but he missed all of last season with an injury. The Vikings added two more corners in this year's draft. Third-rounder Mekhi Blackmon is a long, physical man cover guy who fits Flores' schemes. Fourth-rounder Jay Ward can play in the slot and at safety. Meanwhile, safety Harrison Smith returns for a 12th season and will be a welcome presence as Flores returns the six-time Pro Bowler to a system that's closer to the one he flourished in as former coach Mike Zimmer's most versatile chess piece.

Flores will stick primarily to the 3-4 front with veteran Jordan Hicks returning at inside linebacker and mentoring Kendricks' replacement, second-year player Brian Asamoah II. An outstanding special teamer and situational QB spy on defense last year, Asamoah has speed, instincts and a high ceiling. At edge rusher, Flores must get more out of Danielle Hunter, an elite player who looked too uncomfortable in the switch to the 3-4 last year, and jump-start the slumbering career of Marcus Davenport, a free-agent pickup who never lived up to his status as a first-round pick in New Orleans. Davenport was added to replace Za'Darius Smith, who was traded to the Browns in May after a fast start to 2022 ended quietly due to a midseason leg injury.

A three-man line that doesn't strike much fear into offenses added former Packer Dean Lowry, an end who's steady but unspectacular. Harrison Phillips is a similar veteran on the other side. At nose is Khyiris Tonga, who's tough and physical but inexperienced, like a lot of his peers on this side of the ball.

SPECIALISTS

Greg Joseph missed six extra points, went 4-for-10 on field goals of 50 yards or longer and made fewer than 80 percent of his overall field-goal attempts (78.8). However, strange as it sounds, he's a good, confident guy to have around with the game on the line down the stretch. Last year, he made a franchise-record and NFL record-tying five game-winning field goals, including a franchise-record 61-yarder to beat the Giants as time expired on Christmas Eve. Punter Ryan Wright was an under-the-radar strength as a rookie last year. He's got a huge leg and is learning to control it. Kene Nwangwu is one of the best kick returners in the league with three touchdowns in his first two seasons. Look for quick, elusive receiver Brandon Powell to unseat Jalen Reagor as punt returner after being brought in from the Rams to do just that.

FINAL ANALYSIS

The Vikings won't go 11-0 in one-score games or win the NFC North by four games, like they did last season. Their schedule also is tougher and includes all four of last year's conference finalists (Chiefs, Bengals, Eagles, 49ers). But if everything clicks, they have the firepower and experience offensively and the better direction defensively to fend off the hard-charging Lions and reach the playoffs in back-to-back seasons for the first time since 2008-09.

2022 RESULTS (13-4)

Sept. 11	Green Bay	W	23-7
Sept. 19	at Philadelphia	L	7-24
Sept. 25	Detroit	W	28-24
Oct. 2	vs. New Orleans	W	28-25
Oct. 9	Chicago	W	29-22
Oct. 16	at Miami	W	24-16
Oct. 30	Arizona	W	34-26
Nov. 6	at Washington	W	20-17
Nov. 13	at Buffalo (ot)	W	33-30
Nov. 20	Dallas	L	3-40
Nov. 24	New England	W	33-26
Dec. 4	N.Y. Jets	W	27-22
Dec. 11	at Detroit	L	23-34
Dec. 17	Indianapolis (ot)	W	39-36
Dec. 24	N.Y. Giants	W	27-24
Jan. 1	at Green Bay	L	17-41
Jan. 8	at Chicago	W	29-13
Postseason			
Jan. 15	N.Y. Giants	L	24-31

2022 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	361.5	7	4
Rushing	97.7	T27	T14
Passing	263.8	6	2
Scoring	24.9	8	5
Third Down %	41.2	12	5
EPA/Play	0.004	18	8
TO Differential	+2	T12	T6

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	388.7	31	15
Rushing	123.1	20	8
Passing	265.6	31	16
Scoring	25.1	T28	T13
Interceptions	15	T10	6
Sacks	38	T21	T10
EPA/Play	0.005	16	7

2022 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Kirk Cousins	643	424	4,547	29	14
Nick Mullens	25	21	224	1	1

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Dalvin Cook	264	1,173	4.4	8
Alexander Mattison	74	283	3.8	5

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Justin Jefferson	128	1,809	14.1	8
Adam Thielen	70	716	10.2	6
K.J. Osborn	60	650	10.8	5
T.J. Hockenson	60	519	8.7	3
Dalvin Cook	39	295	7.6	2

KICKING: Greg Joseph, 26-33 FGs, 40-46 PAT, 118 points
TACKLES: Eric Kendricks, 137; Jordan Hicks, 129
SACKS: Danielle Hunter, 10.5; Za'Darius Smith, 10.0
INTERCEPTIONS: Patrick Peterson, 5; Harrison Smith, 5

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

COUSINS PILES UP SAVES Quarterback **Kirk Cousins** posted eight comeback wins in 2022, a league-high for QBs. He also had quite the save last year, buying a golf course that was near and dear to his heart growing up in Michigan. Cousins has no grand plans for the course. He just wanted to make sure it wasn't leveled by a developer and turned into "a housing development or summer rental community." He wanted to save,"the life of a golf course that has been in place since 1926."

BIG BABY One of the greatest characters associated with the current Vikings is Tammie Phillips, the mother of defensive lineman Harrison Phillips. Tammie loves telling the story of the day she knew a not-so-little Harrison was destined for the NFL — Jan. 25, 1996, the day he tied the record for the longest baby ever born at Clarkson Hospital in Omaha, Neb. "Thank goodness for C-section," Tammie says. "They said he would have been 13 pounds if we hadn't gotten him out of there two weeks early."

FINDING HIS CALLING Long snapper Andrew DePaola was 35 and in his eighth NFL season when he became a first-time All-Pro in 2022. Not bad for a guy who took five years after college to make an NFL team. DePaola went to Rutgers as a quarterback but didn't play a down at that position. He switched to receiver but never caught a pass. When the long snapper was injured, DePaola volunteered for that position, too, and was pretty darn good. But it took half a decade to land an NFL gig. To make ends meet, DePaola spent five years doing odd jobs like tending bar at DePaola's Pub in Arbutus, Md. "I did a little bit of everything at the family restaurant, so I tried tending bar so I could make a little more in tips," DePaola says. "A guy comes in and orders scotch on the rocks. I pour like a full glass of scotch. My dad sees me and says, 'That's it. You're done. You're costing me too much money pouring drinks. Go downstairs and keep the books.'"

SCOUTING THE VIKINGS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP MINNESOTA "Justin Jefferson is the consummate route-runner. This guy is special. … Kirk Cousins has his critics, for sure, but he's still playing at an extremely high level. … I liked the Jordan Addison pick. He should give them a good complementary presence to work in tandem with Jefferson. Between Jefferson, Addison and tight end T.J. Hockenson, that's a lot of weapons. … Garrett Bradbury was a smart re-signing. He's technically sound, mobile and can peel off to block linebackers at the second level. … Quietly, this is a strong offensive line. Especially Christian Darrisaw. He's a legit pass blocker. …The Dalvin Cook situation hangs over these guys, and how they handle his deal is going to be interesting. They can ride with Alexander Mattison, who's really talented and versatile, if Cook is out of the equation. I'm just not sure what they're getting back in a trade scenario for Cook. Running backs don't have a lot of trade value, generally. … Za'Darius Smith wanting out raises eyebrows. Without him, that pass rush is in trouble. Obviously, [the trade was] financially related. … Danielle Hunter is a freak athlete. He's extremely tough to stop rushing off the edge. … Signing Marcus Davenport should help the defense a lot, even if the guy is a bit of a tease in terms of availability. He has every tool to be a good player. He just lacks durability. … Brian Asamoah II is a thumper at Mike linebacker. … That was good that they brought back Harrison Smith. They really needed to have him back to make this defense click. He's rangy and will strike you."

MATT KROHN/USA TODAY SPORTS

2023 VIKINGS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS.	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
8 Cousins, Kirk	QB	6-3	205	11	Michigan State	FA-Was-18	D4a-Was-12
12 Mullens, Nick	QB	6-0	210	5	Southern Miss	T-LV-22	FA-SF-17

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
32 Chandler, Ty	RB	5-11	204	1	North Carolina	D5b-22	D5b-Min-22
4 Cook, Dalvin	RB	5-10	210	6	Florida State	D2-17	D2-Min-17
30 Ham, C.J.	FB	5-11	250	6	Augustana	FA-16	FA-Min-16
2 Mattison, Alexander	RB	5-11	215	4	Boise State	D3-19	D3-Min-19
26 Nwangwu, Kene	RB	6-1	210	2	Iowa State	D4a-21	D4a-Min-21

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
82 Ellefson, Ben	TE	6-3	250	3	North Dakota St.	W-Jac-21	FA-Jac-20
87 Hockenson, T.J.	TE	6-5	248	4	Iowa	T-Det-22	D1-Det-19
9 Jackson, Trishton	WR	6-1	191	2	Syracuse	FA-21	FA-LAR-20
18 Jefferson, Justin	WR	6-1	195	3	LSU	D1a-20	D1a-Min-20
86 Mundt, Johnny	TE	6-4	233	5	Oregon	FA-LAR-22	FA-LAR-17
34 Muse, Nick	TE	6-5	252	1	South Carolina	D7-22	D7-Min-22
83 Nailor, Jalen	WR	6-0	190	1	Michigan State	D6b-22	D6b-Min-22
84 Oliver, Josh	TE	6-5	259	4	San José State	FA-Bal-23	D3-Jac-19
17 Osborn, K.J.	WR	5-11	203	3	Miami (Fla.)	D5b-20	D5b-Min-20
19 Powell, Brandon	WR	5-8	181	4	Florida	FA-LAR-23	FA-Det-18
13 Proehl, Blake	WR	6-1	190	2	East Carolina	FA-21	FA-Min-21
5 Reagor, Jalen	WR	5-11	197	3	TCU	T-Phi-22	D1-Phi-20

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
56 Bradbury, Garrett	C	6-3	300	4	NC State	D1-19	D1-Min-19
64 Brandel, Blake	T	6-7	315	2	Oregon State	D6a-20	D6a-Min-20
72 Cleveland, Ezra	G	6-6	312	3	Boise State	D2-20	D2-Min-20
71 Darrisaw, Christian	T	6-5	315	2	Virginia Tech	D1-21	D1-Min-21
68 Hinton, Kyle	G	6-2	315	2	Washburn	D7d-20	D7d-Min-20
67 Ingram, Ed	G	6-3	307	1	LSU	D2b-22	D2b-Min-22
63 Lowe, Vederian	T	6-6	320	1	Illinois	D6a-22	D6a-Min-22
75 O'Neill, Brian	T	6-7	310	5	Pittsburgh	D2-18	D2-Min-18
62 Reed, Chris	G/C	6-3	314	7	Minnesota State	FA-Ind-22	FA-Jac-15
65 Schlottmann, Austin	G/C	6-6	300	4	TCU	FA-Den-22	FA-Den-18
60 Sokol, Josh	C	6-3	290	1	Sacred Heart	FA-22	FA-Min-22
74 Udoh, Olisaemeka	G	6-6	320	4	Elon	D6c-19	D6c-Min-19

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
96 Blacklock, Ross	DL	6-3	290	3	TCU	T-Hou-22	D2-Hou-20
93 Bullard, Jonathan	DL	6-3	290	7	Florida	FA-22	D3-Chi-16
52 Day, Sheldon	DT	6-1	293	6	Notre Dame	FA-23	D4-Jac-16
94 Lowry, Dean	DL	6-6	296	7	Northwestern	FA-GB-23	D4b-GB-16
92 Lynch, James	DL	6-4	295	3	Baylor	D4b-20	D4b-Min-20
90 Otomewo, Esezi	DL	6-5	282	1	Minnesota	D5a-22	D5a-Min-22
97 Phillips, Harrison	DL	6-3	307	5	Stanford	FA-Buf-22	D3-Buf-18
50 Smith, T.J.	DL	6-3	300	2	Arkansas	FA-21	FA-LAC-20
95 Tonga, Khyiris	DL	6-4	338	2	BYU	FA-22	D7-Chi-21
54 Weaver, Curtis	DL	6-2	265	2	Boise State	FA-23	D5-Mia-20
79 Willekes, Kenny	DL	6-3	264	3	Michigan State	D7a-20	D7a-Min-20

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
33 Asamoah II, Brian	LB	6-0	226	1	Oklahoma	D3-22	D3-Min-22
0 Davenport, Marcus	OLB	6-6	265	5	UTSA	FA-NO-23	D1-NO-18
45 Dye, Troy	LB	6-3	225	3	Oregon	D4c-20	D4c-Min-20
58 Hicks, Jordan	LB	6-1	236	8	Texas	FA-Ari-22	D3-Phi-15
99 Hunter, Danielle	OLB	6-5	263	8	LSU	D3-15	D3-Min-15
91 Jones II, Pat	OLB	6-4	264	2	Pittsburgh	D3d-21	D3d-Min-21
47 Kwenkeu, William	LB	6-1	235	1	Temple	FA-22	FA-Min-22
59 Reeder, Troy	LB	6-3	245	4	Delaware	FA-LAC-23	FA-LAR-19
43 Vilain, Luiji	OLB	6-4	252	1	Wake Forest	FA-22	FA-Min-22
51 Whitley, Benton	OLB	6-3	260	1	Holy Cross	FA-22	FA-LAR-22
98 Wonnum, D.J.	OLB	6-5	258	3	South Carolina	D4a-20	D4a-Min-20

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
27 Barnes, Kalon	CB	6-0	186	1	Baylor	FA-22	D7-Car-22
23 Booth Jr., Andrew	CB	6-0	194	1	Clemson	D2a-22	D2a-Min-22
24 Bynum, Camryn	S	6-0	200	2	California	D4b-21	D4b-Min-21
6 Cine, Lewis	S	6-2	199	1	Georgia	D1-22	D1-Min-22
46 Dorn, Myles	S	6-2	210	3	North Carolina	FA-20	FA-Min-20
21 Evans, Akayleb	CB	6-2	198	1	Missouri	D4-22	D4-Min-22
31 Gowan, Tay	CB	6-2	185	2	UCF	FA-22	D6-Ari-21
25 Jackson, Theo	S	6-1	198	1	Tennessee	FA-22	D6-Ten-22
44 Metellus, Josh	S	5-11	207	3	Michigan	D6b-20	D6b-Min-20
7 Murphy Jr., Byron	CB	5-11	190	4	Washington	FA-Ari-23	D2a-Ari-19
35 Nickerson, Parry	CB	5-10	179	5	Tulane	FA-21	D6-NYJ-18
Reid, John	CB	5-10	187	3	Penn State	W-Atl-23	D4-Hou-20
22 Smith, Harrison	S	6-2	211	11	Notre Dame	D1b-12	D1b-Min-12
29 Williams, Joejuan	CB	6-3	212	4	Vanderbilt	FA-NE-23	D2-NE-19

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
42 DePaola, Andrew	LS	6-1	229	8	Rutgers	FA-20	FA-TB-12
1 Joseph, Greg	K	6-0	206	5	Florida Atlantic	FA-21	FA-Mia-18
14 Wright, Ryan	P	6-3	245	1	Tulane	FA-22	FA-Min-22

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	18	Justin Jefferson	5	Jalen Reagor
WR	17	K.J. Osborn	3	Jordan Addison (R)
LT	71	Christian Darrisaw	64	Blake Brandel
LG	72	Ezra Cleveland	65	Austin Schlottmann
C	56	Garrett Bradbury	60	Josh Sokol
RG	67	Ed Ingram	62	Chris Reed
RT	75	Brian O'Neill	74	Olisaemeka Udoh
TE	87	T.J. Hockenson	84	Josh Oliver
QB	8	Kirk Cousins	12	Nick Mullens
RB	2	Alexander Mattison	26	Kene Nwangwu
FB	30	C.J. Ham		

DEFENSE

DE	94	Dean Lowry	90	Esezi Otomewo
NT	95	Khyiris Tonga	93	Jonathan Bullard
DE	97	Harrison Phillips	92	James Lynch
OLB	99	Danielle Hunter	91	Pat Jones II
MLB	33	Brian Asamoah II	45	Troy Dye
WLB	58	Jordan Hicks	59	Troy Reeder
OLB	0	Marcus Davenport	98	D.J. Wonnum
CB	7	Byron Murphy Jr.	21	Akayleb Evans
CB	23	Andrew Booth Jr.	29	Joejuan Williams
SS	22	Harrison Smith	44	Josh Metellus
FS	24	Camryn Bynum	6	Lewis Cine

SPECIALISTS

K	1	Greg Joseph	KR	26 Kene Nwangwu
P	14	Ryan Wright	PR	19 Brandon Powell

13.9

Justin Jefferson had a league-high average of 13.9 yards per touch, best among players who averaged at least 6.25 touches per game last season.

VIKINGS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Jordan Addison	WR	6-0	175	USC
3.	Mekhi Blackmon	CB	5-11	178	USC
4.	Jay Ward	DB	6-1	188	LSU
5.	Jaquelin Roy	DT	6-3	305	LSU
5.	Jaren Hall	QB	6-0	207	BYU
7.	DeWayne McBride	RB	5-10	209	UAB

Jordan Addison is a small receiver with immediate big-impact potential. He can play anywhere in three-receiver sets and will help make defenses pay for overloading coverage to Justin Jefferson. Mekhi Blackmon is an aggressive man-coverage corner who fits new defensive coordinator Brian Flores' more aggressive scheme. Jay Ward can play nickel, corner or safety in Flores' versatile sets. Jaquelin Roy's quick feet and power might give the Vikings the inside pass rusher they've lacked. Jaren Hall is a quick-minded project to groom as the No. 3 QB. DeWayne McBride is a quick, powerful back with better hands than his college numbers show.

ATL FALCONS

NFC SOUTH FORECAST

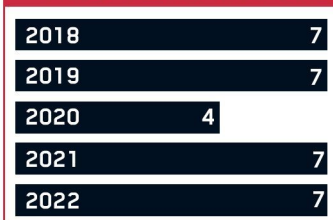
3

2023 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 10	Carolina	1:00
Sept. 17	Green Bay	1:00
Sept. 24	at Detroit	1:00
Oct. 1	Jacksonville (London)	9:30
Oct. 8	Houston	1:00
Oct. 15	Washington	1:00
Oct. 22	at Tampa Bay	1:00
Oct. 29	at Tennessee	1:00
Nov. 5	Minnesota	1:00
Nov. 12	at Arizona	4:05
Nov. 19	BYE	
Nov. 26	New Orleans	1:00
Dec. 3	at N.Y. Jets	1:00
Dec. 10	Tampa Bay	1:00
Dec. 17	at Carolina	TBD
Dec. 24	Indianapolis	1:00
Dec. 31	at Chicago	1:00
Jan. 7	at New Orleans	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND



THE COACHES

Head Coach: Arthur Smith
Record With Team: 7-10
Career Record: 7-10
Offensive Coordinator: Dave Ragone
Defensive Coordinator: Ryan Nielsen
Special Teams Coordinator: Marquice Williams
Running Backs: Michael Pitre
Wide Receivers: T.J. Yates
Tight Ends: Justin Peelle
Offensive Line: Dwayne Ledford
Assistant Head Coach/Defense: Jerry Gray
Defensive Front: Lanier Goethie
Linebackers: Frank Bush
Secondary: Steve Jackson

With their playoff drought now at five seasons — the franchise's longest since the late 1980s — the Atlanta Falcons finally might be ready to make a comeback. The team has worked diligently for the past few years to shed high-impact salary cap hits on former pillars such as quarterback Matt Ryan and wide receiver Julio Jones while rebuilding a roster that was left in shambles by the previous regime. That hard work might finally pay off as third-year head coach Arthur Smith and general manager Terry Fontenot see their master plan begin to blossom.

The Falcons are built to antagonize opposing NFL defenses built for pass-happy football. Atlanta fielded one of the league's best rushing attacks last season and has continued to stock up on running back and offensive line talent. Coupling that with an intriguing young quarterback in Desmond Ridder and a much-improved defense makes you wonder if things might finally be looking up for Atlanta. Time will tell in an ever-changing and seemingly wide-open NFC South, but you have to like the Falcons' odds.

OFFENSE

The Falcons are going to run the ball. A lot. Last season, the team found a bridge quarterback (Marcus Mariota) who could use his legs and a rookie running back (Tyler Allgeier) who rushed for more than 1,000 yards. The team also had rushing threats like wily veteran Cordarrelle Patterson and former UDFA Caleb Huntley in the backfield.

Atlanta ranked third in the NFL last season with 2,718 rushing yards, behind only Chicago and Baltimore. In 2023, the team might have the best running back room in the entire league with 2023 first-round pick Bijan Robinson joining Allgeier and Patterson to comprise a formidable trio at the position. Huntley tore his Achilles toward the end of the 2022 season and could miss significant time in the fall as he recovers.

Robinson, the eighth overall pick in 2023, is a generational talent who rushed for 3,410 yards and 33 touchdowns in 31 games at Texas. He will provide a huge boost for Ridder, who will assume starting duties for the first time in his career.

Ridder might not have the extensive game tape to back up the team's decision to name him the starting quarterback, but his first four career starts to close the 2022 season were promising. He passed for 708 yards and two touchdowns and didn't throw an interception. His ability to sling it with more spark than Mariota should help the Falcons field a more balanced offense.

The receiver room looks to benefit from Ridder's ascent. Tight end Kyle Pitts, a 2021 first-round pick, had a quiet sophomore campaign after a Pro Bowl season as a rookie. However, a lot of that had to do with injuries and Mariota's inability to hit the deep ball on a consistent basis. Pitts should experience a major bounce-back season and take his rightful place as one of the NFL's best tight ends. Second-year wideout Drake London will join Pitts as one of the team's premier pass catchers. He hauled in a team-high 72 receptions for 866 yards and four touchdowns in his rookie season. The Falcons traded for tight end Jonnu Smith, a former staple in Arthur Smith's Tennessee Titans offense. At the wideout position, free-agent signings Mack Hollins and Scott Miller should see plenty of snaps. Parker Hesse will return as the team's primary blocking tight end, and 2022 draft pick John FitzPatrick could be a surprise to make the team's 53-man roster.

DALE ZANINE-USA TODAY SPORTS

The offensive line returns four starters from last season in left tackle Jake Matthews, center Drew Dalman, right guard Chris Lindstrom and right tackle Kaleb McGary. Second-round draft pick Matthew Bergeron should compete with veteran interior offensive linemen Matt Hennessy and Jalen Mayfield for the left guard spot. Bergeron's nasty run-blocking ability makes him the favorite to win the job.

DEFENSE

Atlanta's defense has been a sore spot for quite some time, and new defensive coordinator Ryan Nielsen was brought in to fix the team's long-suffering pass rush and add a grittier edge overall. The Falcons spent tons of money in free agency to add talent to this side of the ball, and the unit looks much stronger on paper than it has in years. A lot of that has to do with the radical transformation of the defensive line.

Nielsen is known for his ability to coax a pass rush out of his guys, and he's got plenty of options in tow. Longtime starter Grady Jarrett is still the team's best defensive lineman, but he's now flanked by future Hall of Fame defensive end Calais Campbell and former New Orleans Saints defensive tackle David Onyemata. Add third-year end Ta'Quon Graham, and the Falcons suddenly have a devastating quartet to power a front that could shift to a 4-3 alignment under Nielsen. Veteran nose tackle Eddie Goldman and 2023 third-round pick Zach Harrison should also factor in as talented reserves.

The linebacker group also looks vastly improved. The Falcons signed former Saints linebacker Kaden Elliss and former Titans edge rusher Bud Dupree to a group that already included Arnold Ebiketie, Troy Andersen, Lorenzo Carter, Mykal Walker and DeAngelo Malone. Ebiketie should be poised for a breakout year on the outside, while Elliss and Andersen could give the team an athletic inside tandem. Elliss had seven sacks for New Orleans last year, so his versatility will be key for the group.

In the defensive backfield, former Cincinnati Bengals safety Jessie Bates III signed a huge deal (four years, $64 million, $23 million guaranteed) and will join cornerback A.J. Terrell as an elite fixture. The Falcons also traded for cornerback Jeff Okudah and hope to help him reach his ceiling after three years of struggles in Detroit. Okudah should start next to Terrell at cornerback barring a surprise. Fourth-round rookie Clark Phillips III has the inside track to be the team's starting nickel corner, though he'll battle with free-agent arrival Mike Hughes and Dee Alford for the gig. Richie Grant should join Bates in the safety group and will improve with Bates as a running mate.

The team also hired former Packers defensive backs coach Jerry Gray to help revamp its secondary, while Nielsen's primary task will be improving a pass rush that ranked 31st in sacks (21) last season. Between those two coaches and tons of talent infusions at all levels of the defense, perhaps the Falcons will find consistent success on defense for the first time since the 2017 season.

SPECIALISTS

The Falcons' special teams trio is set in stone. Kicker Younghoe Koo, a former Pro Bowler, will be joined once again by punter Bradley Pinion and long snapper Liam McCullough. Koo has become one of the most reliable kickers in the game, and Pinion provides sound play as a veteran punter.

Kickoff returns should go to Patterson first and foremost, but punt returner Avery Williams could also field kickoffs when needed.

FINAL ANALYSIS

They started to build momentum with back-to-back wins to cap 2022, and now the Falcons appear to be a much better team after making a number of key offseason moves, although it remains to be seen how quickly Ridder will acclimate to his starting duties and how well the defense coalesces with so many additions.

If you're wondering about the team's playoff chances, perhaps it's a good sign that a veteran like Campbell chose to join the Falcons over a more obvious contender. That's not to say that Atlanta is ready to go toe-to-toe with a team like Philadelphia, but the Falcons should have enough talent and coaching to contend in the NFC South. Breaking their postseason drought could become a reality.

2022 RESULTS (7-10)

Sept.	11	New Orleans	L	26-27
Sept.	18	at L.A. Rams	L	27-31
Sept.	25	at Seattle	W	27-23
Oct.	2	Cleveland	W	23-20
Oct.	9	at Tampa Bay	L	15-21
Oct.	16	San Francisco	W	28-14
Oct.	23	at Cincinnati	L	17-35
Oct.	30	Carolina (ot)	W	37-34
Nov.	6	L.A. Chargers	L	17-20
Nov.	10	at Carolina	L	15-25
Nov.	20	Chicago	W	27-24
Nov.	27	at Washington	L	13-19
Dec.	4	Pittsburgh	L	16-19
Dec.	18	at New Orleans	L	18-21
Dec.	24	at Baltimore	L	9-17
Jan.	1	Arizona	W	20-19
Jan.	8	Tampa Bay	W	30-17

2022 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	319.6	24	13
Rushing	159.9	3	2
Passing	158.8	31	15
Scoring	21.5	T15	T8
Third Down %	41.8	10	4
EPA/Play	0.002	19	9
TO Differential	-4	T24	T14

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	362.1	27	13
Rushing	130.2	23	10
Passing	231.9	25	14
Scoring	22.7	23	11
Interceptions	10	T24	T11
Sacks	21	31	15
EPA/Play	0.063	29	14

2022 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Marcus Mariota	300	184	2,219	15	9
Desmond Ridder	115	73	708	2	0

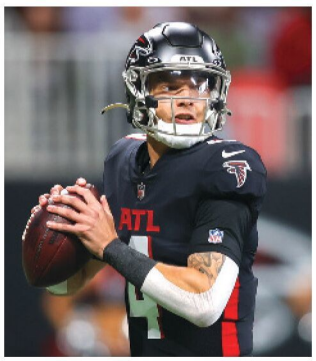
RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Tyler Allgeier	210	1,035	4.9	3
Cordarrelle Patterson	144	695	4.8	8
Marcus Mariota	85	438	5.2	4
Caleb Huntley	76	366	4.8	1

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Drake London	72	866	12.0	4
Olamide Zaccheaus	40	533	13.3	3
Kyle Pitts	28	356	12.7	2
Cordarrelle Patterson	21	122	5.8	0

KICKING: Younghoe Koo, 32-37 FGs, 33-35 PAT, 129 points
TACKLES: Rashaan Evans, 159; Richie Grant, 123
SACKS: Grady Jarrett, 6.0; Lorenzo Carter, 4.0
INTERCEPTIONS: Richie Grant, 2; Jaylinn Hawkins, 2; Mykal Walker, 2

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

ALRIGHT, ALRIGHT, ALRIGHT New running back Bijan Robinson is a friend to Oscar-winning actor Matthew McConaughey. The two have the Texas Longhorns as a shared connection, and Robinson wants to try acting in the future.



BACK TO BASICS Quarterback **Desmond Ridder** will be making a pretty big change in his first season as a starter. He'll be switching back to his college number 9 for his jersey. That number seemed to work well for him when he led Cincinnati to the College Football Playoff.

QUITE A CONNECTION Offensive tackle Tyler Vrabel has a pretty direct connection to head coach Arthur Smith. Vrabel is the son of Tennessee Titans head coach Mike Vrabel, who was Smith's boss in Nashville. Now, the younger Vrabel plays for Smith.

FIRST IN THE SECONDARY The cornerback group now has three former first-round players. In addition to Falcons 2020 first-round pick A.J. Terrell, Jeff Okudah (2020, Lions) and Mike Hughes (2018, Vikings) joined the team in the offseason.

IRON MAN Offensive tackle Jake Matthews has made 144 consecutive starts since entering the league in 2014, giving him the NFL's longest active streak. He found a way last season to see the birth of his child and still make a road game in Carolina the same day.

REUNITED Smith had two big reunions this offseason. Atlanta added his old Titans tight end Jonnu Smith in a trade with the New England Patriots. Arthur Smith also got to add Jerry Gray to his coaching staff; Smith and Gray coached together with the Titans more than a decade ago.

LACROSSE, ANYONE? Falcons receiver Jared Bernhardt was a star lacrosse player at Maryland. In 2021, he won the Tewaaraton Award in 2021, which is given to the nation's top college lacrosse player. Bernhardt then transferred to Ferris State for his only season of college football.

SCOUTING THE FALCONS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP ATLANTA "The decision to pick Bijan Robinson gives Atlanta a building block and a versatile weapon in and out of the backfield. The offense really needed someone to take the pressure off of Desmond Ridder. Play-action fakes will truly be respected, and Bijan can help Desmond as a pass-catching presence as well as a runner. Robinson has rare moves and acceleration. This was the fastest path to upgrading the offense. … Drake London wins those contested catches. He's big and tough and can jump and body defensive backs out of the way. … Kyle Pitts' comeback bears watching. If Pitts regains his old form, this offense starts looking a lot better. That right side of the line (Kaleb McGary and Chris Lindstrom) is pretty darn tough. … Jake Matthews doesn't get a lot of attention among the best left tackles, but he's very solid and has great technique and fundamentals. … Ridder is pretty accurate and mobile. I don't know what the ceiling is going to wind up being, but his floor is not bad at all. … This defensive line, except for Grady Jarrett, has something to prove. Calais Campbell is much older than ideal (37). David Onyemata needs to justify the big contract. And Bud Dupree is coming off an injury. … A.J. Terrell has been solid, earning that fifth-year club option. … This is a chance for Jeff Okudah to prove the Lions gave up on him too soon. … Jessie Bates III has great range and timing. He cost a lot to sign, but it's a strong move by Terry Fontenot."

BRETT DAVIS/USA TODAY SPORTS

2023 FALCONS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS.	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
4 Heinicke, Taylor	QB	6-1	210	8	Old Dominion	FA-Was-23	FA-Min-15
9 Ridder, Desmond	QB	6-4	202	1	Cincinnati	D3a-22	D3a-Atl-22
11 Woodside, Logan	QB	6-1	213	3	Toledo	PS-Ten-22	D7-Cin-18
RUNNING BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
25 Allgeier, Tyler	RB	5-10	226	1	BYU	D5-22	D5-Atl-22
36 Baylor, B.J.	RB	5-10	202	1	Oregon State	FA-22	FA-GB-22
42 Huntley, Caleb	RB	5-10	226	1	Ball State	FA-22	FA-Atl-21
84 Patterson, Cordarrelle	RB	6-2	232	10	Tennessee	FA-Chi-21	D1c-Min-13
38 Ratkovich, Clint	FB	6-1	220	1	Northern Illinois	FA-22	FA-Atl-22
40 Smith, Keith	FB	6-0	235	9	San José State	FA-19	FA-Dal-14
26 Williams, Avery	RB	5-9	196	2	Boise State	D5c-21	D5c-Atl-21
RECEIVERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
80 Ali, Josh	WR	6-0	200	1	Kentucky	FA-22	FA-Atl-22
83 Bernhardt, Jared	WR	6-1	194	1	Ferris State	FA-22	FA-Atl-22
88 Darby, Frank	WR	6-1	199	2	Arizona State	FA-22	D6-Atl-21
43 Fisk, Tucker	TE	6-4	273	1	Stanford	FA-23	FA-Atl-22
87 FitzPatrick, John	TE	6-7	255	1	Georgia	D6b-22	D6b-Atl-22
15 Franks, Feleipe	TE	6-6	241	2	Arkansas	FA-21	FA-Atl-21
19 Hart, Penny	WR	5-8	180	4	Georgia State	FA-Sea-23	FA-Ind-19
89 Henry, Ra'Shaun	WR	6-3	190	1	Virginia	FA-22	FA-Car-22
46 Hesse, Parker	TE	6-3	253	2	Iowa	FA-21	FA-Ten-19
12 Hodge, KhaDarel	WR	6-2	208	4	Prairie View A&M	FA-Det-22	FA-LAR-18
18 Hollins, Mack	WR	6-4	221	6	North Carolina	FA-LV-23	D4-Phi-17
5 London, Drake	WR	6-4	219	1	USC	D1-22	D1-Atl-22
16 Miller, Scott	WR	5-9	174	4	Bowling Green	FA-TB-23	D6-TB-19
8 Pitts, Kyle	TE	6-6	247	2	Florida	D1-21	D1-Atl-21
41 Raine, John	TE	6-2	230	1	Northwestern	FA-22	FA-Atl-21
81 Smith, Jonnu	TE	6-3	248	6	FIU	T-NE-23	D3b-Ten-17
OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
67 Dalman, Drew	OL	6-3	305	2	Stanford	D4b-21	D4b-Atl-21
71 Greenidge, Ethan	T	6-4	335	4	Villanova	FA-NO-23	FA-NO-19
62 Harrison, Jonotthan	OL	6-4	300	7	Florida	FA-22	FA-Ind-14
61 Hennessy, Matt	OL	6-4	309	3	Temple	D3-20	D3-Atl-20
68 Hinton, Kyle	OL	6-2	315	2	Washburn	FA-23	D7-Min-20
74 Ifedi, Germain	OL	6-5	338	6	Texas A&M	FA-Chi-22	D1-Sea-16
63 Lindstrom, Chris	G	6-4	299	4	Boston College	D1a-19	D1a-Atl-19
70 Matthews, Jake	T	6-5	314	9	Texas A&M	D1-14	D1-Atl-14
77 Mayfield, Jalen	OL	6-5	320	2	Michigan	D3-21	D3-Atl-21
76 McGary, Kaleb	T	6-6	341	4	Washington	D1b-19	D1b-Atl-19
66 Miles, Josh	T	6-5	325	3	Morgan State	FA-Ari-23	D7a-Ari-19
64 Neuzil, Ryan	OL	6-3	303	1	Appalachian State	FA-22	FA-Atl-21
75 Shaffer, Justin	OL	6-4	317	1	Georgia	D6a-22	D6a-Atl-22
73 Vrabel, Tyler	OL	6-6	319	1	Boston College	FA-22	FA-Atl-22
DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
93 Campbell, Calais	DL	6-8	307	15	Miami (Fla.)	FA-Bal-23	D2-Ari-08
94 Dalton, Jalen	DL	6-6	300	3	North Carolina	FA-22	FA-Chi-19
99 Gaziano, Joe	DL	6-4	280	2	Northwestern	FA-LAC-23	FA-LAC-20
91 Goldman, Eddie	DL	6-3	325	6	Florida State	FA-22	D2-Chi-15
95 Graham, Ta'Quon	DL	6-4	307	2	Texas	D5a-21	D5a-Atl-21
93 Horne, Timothy	DL	6-5	323	1	Kansas State	FA-22	FA-Atl-22
97 Jarrett, Grady	DL	6-0	288	8	Clemson	D5-15	D5-Atl-15
90 Onyemata, David	DT	6-4	300	7	Manitoba	FA-NO-23	D4-NO-16
LINEBACKERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
44 Andersen, Troy	ILB	6-4	239	1	Montana State	D2b-22	D2b-Atl-22
59 Anenih, David	OLB	6-2	245	1	Houston	PS-Pit-22	FA-Ten-22
0 Carter, Lorenzo	OLB	6-5	264	5	Georgia	FA-NYG-22	D3-NYG-18
50 Davis, Tae	LB	6-0	222	4	Chattanooga	FA-Cle-23	FA-NYG-18
48 Dupree, Bud	OLB	6-4	269	8	Kentucky	FA-Ten-23	D1-Pit-15
47 Ebiketie, Arnold	OLB	6-2	250	1	Penn State	D2a-22	D2a-Atl-22
55 Elliss, Kaden	LB	6-2	238	4	Idaho	FA-NO-23	D7b-NO-19
52 Etheridge, Dorian	ILB	6-3	230	2	Louisville	FA-22	FA-Atl-21
53 Landman, Nate	ILB	6-3	238	1	Colorado	FA-22	FA-Atl-22
51 Malone, DeAngelo	OLB	6-3	246	1	WKU	D3b-22	D3b-Atl-22
92 Ogundeji, Ade	OLB	6-4	251	2	Notre Dame	D5b-21	D5b-Atl-21
3 Walker, Mykal	ILB	6-3	232	3	Fresno State	D4a-20	D4a-Atl-20
DEFENSIVE BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
45 Abernathy, Micah	S	6-0	195	1	Tennessee	PS-GB-22	FA-Min-19
37 Alford, Dee	CB	5-11	177	1	Tusculum	FA-22	FA-Atl-22
22 Armstrong, Cornell	DB	6-0	185	4	Southern Miss	FA-22	D6-Mia-18
30 Bates III, Jessie	S	6-1	200	5	Wake Forest	FA-Cin-23	D2-Cin-18
27 Grant, Richie	S	6-0	204	2	UCF	D2-21	D2-Atl-21
33 Guidry, Javelin	CB	5-9	191	3	Utah	FA-22	FA-NYJ-20
34 Hall, Darren	CB	6-0	190	2	San Diego State	D4a-21	D4a-Atl-21
30 Hankins, Matt	CB	6-1	182	1	Iowa	FA-22	FA-Atl-22
32 Hawkins, Jaylinn	S	6-1	211	3	California	D4b-20	D4b-Atl-20
21 Hughes, Mike	CB	5-10	191	5	UCF	FA-Det-23	D1-Min-18
39 Mabin, Dylan	DB	6-1	196	2	Fordham	FA-22	FA-LV-19
1 Okudah, Jeff	CB	6-1	205	3	Ohio State	T-Det-23	D1-Det-20
38 Peters, Jamal	DB	6-1	219	1	Mississippi State	FA-23	FA-Ind-19
24 Terrell, A.J.	CB	6-1	194	3	Clemson	D1-20	D1-Atl-20
SPECIALISTS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
6 Koo, Younghoe	K	5-10	193	5	Georgia Southern	FA-19	FA-LAC-17
48 McCullough, Liam	LS	6-2	247	1	Ohio State	FA-22	FA-LV-20
13 Pinion, Bradley	P	6-5	255	8	Clemson	FA-22	D5-SF-15

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	5	Drake London	16	Scott Miller
WR	18	Mack Hollins	12	KhaDarel Hodge
LT	70	Jake Matthews	66	Josh Miles
LG	65	Matthew Bergeron (R)	61	Matt Hennessy
C	67	Drew Dalman	61	Matt Hennessy
RG	63	Chris Lindstrom	77	Jalen Mayfield
RT	76	Kaleb McGary	74	Germain Ifedi
TE	8	Kyle Pitts	81	Jonnu Smith
QB	9	Desmond Ridder	4	Taylor Heinicke
RB	25	Tyler Allgeier	84	Cordarrelle Patterson
RB	7	Bijan Robinson (R)	26	Avery Williams

DEFENSE

DE	93	Calais Campbell	96	Zach Harrison (R)
DT	90	David Onyemata	91	Eddie Goldman
DE	97	Grady Jarrett	95	Ta'Quon Graham
OLB	47	Arnold Ebiketie	48	Bud Dupree
ILB	55	Kaden Elliss	3	Mykal Walker
ILB	44	Troy Andersen	50	Tae Davis
OLB	0	Lorenzo Carter	51	DeAngelo Malone
CB	24	A.J. Terrell	21	Mike Hughes
CB	1	Jeff Okudah	34	Clark Phillips III (R)
SS	27	Richie Grant	32	Jaylinn Hawkins
FS	30	Jessie Bates III	37	DeMarcco Hellams (R)

SPECIALISTS

K	6	Younghoe Koo	KR	84	Cordarrelle Patterson
P	13	Bradley Pinion	PR	26	Avery Williams

1,017

The Falcons were inconsistent in the passing game, but they were physical in the ground game and recorded 1,017 rushing yards after contact, third best in the NFL.

FALCONS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: A-

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Bijan Robinson	RB	5-11	215	Texas
2.	Matthew Bergeron	G	6-5	323	Syracuse
3.	Zach Harrison	DE	6-6	272	Ohio State
4.	Clark Phillips III	CB	5-10	183	Utah
5.	DeMarcco Hellams	S	6-1	213	Alabama
6.	Jovaughn Gwyn	G	6-3	301	South Carolina

Bijan Robinson will step in as an immediate contributor on offense and should become a franchise face in no time. Matthew Bergeron will compete for the left guard spot right away and could win it. Zach Harrison, a power rusher, should develop into a starter down the road. Clark Phillips III has tons of potential as a slot corner despite his size concerns. DeMarcco Hellams can play on special teams and back up the safety group. Jovaughn Gwyn is a developmental talent for the offensive line who can play guard and center.

CAR PANTHERS

NFC SOUTH FORECAST

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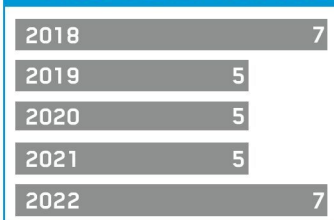
2023 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 10	at Atlanta	1:00
Sept. 18	New Orleans	7:15
Sept. 24	at Seattle	4:05
Oct. 1	Minnesota	1:00
Oct. 8	at Detroit	1:00
Oct. 15	at Miami	1:00
Oct. 22	BYE	
Oct. 29	Houston	1:00
Nov. 5	Indianapolis	4:05
Nov. 9	at Chicago	8:15
Nov. 19	Dallas	1:00
Nov. 26	at Tennessee	1:00
Dec. 3	at Tampa Bay	1:00
Dec. 10	at New Orleans	1:00
Dec. 17	Atlanta	TBD
Dec. 24	Green Bay	1:00
Dec. 31	at Jacksonville	1:00
Jan. 7	Tampa Bay	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND



THE COACHES

Head Coach: Frank Reich
Record With Team: 0-0
Career Record: 40-33-1
Offensive Coordinator: Thomas Brown
Defensive Coordinator: Ejiro Evero
Special Teams Coordinator: Chris Tabor
Senior Assistant: Jim Caldwell
Senior Defensive Assistant: Dom Capers
Quarterbacks: Josh McCown
Assistant Head Coach/Running Backs: Duce Staley
Wide Receivers: Shawn Jefferson
Tight Ends: John Lilly
Offensive Line: James Campen
Defensive Line: Todd Wash
Linebackers: Peter Hansen
Outside Linebackers: Tem Lukabu
Secondary/Cornerbacks: Jonathan Cooley
Safeties: Bert Watts

The Carolina Panthers have been in "wait until next year" mode for what feels like forever to their fans. They've missed the playoffs five seasons in a row. Now, with a new quarterback and a new head coach, they will try again to reinvent themselves into a team to be reckoned with in the NFC South.

The Panthers ended the woeful Matt Rhule era midway through the 2022 season, as owner David Tepper decided to fire Rhule after watching him go 11-27 over two seasons and part of a third. Now Tepper and general manager Scott Fitterer have cast their lot with Frank Reich, who not only had a relatively successful coaching tenure at Indianapolis (before being fired himself one month after Rhule was canned in 2022) but also was the Panthers' very first starting quarterback.

Reich was hired as a quarterback whisperer, with the idea being that he could develop a new QB for a team that has many of the other pieces in place. Now the Panthers have drafted Bryce Young, hoping the No. 1 overall selection in the 2023 NFL Draft can eventually take them to the promised land. There will be bumps in the road for sure, though, and some of those will occur this season as Young tries to figure out the NFL on the fly.

OFFENSE

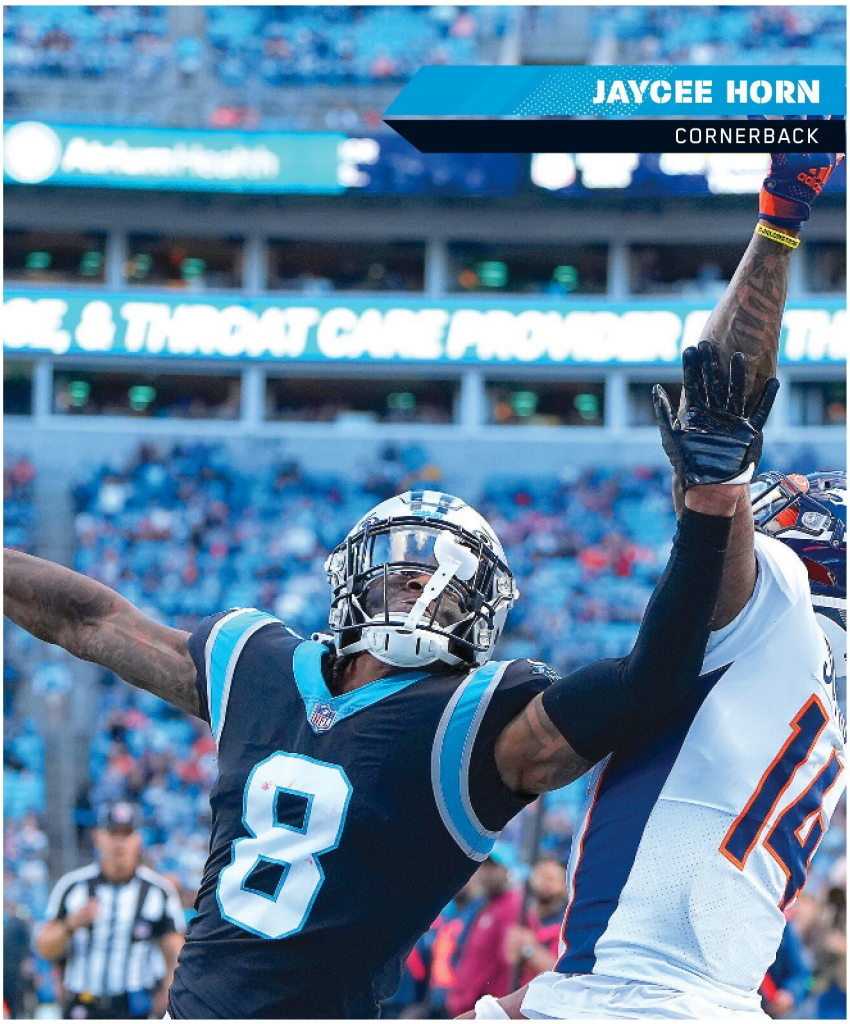
The Panthers have tried hard to put an offense in place that will allow Young to succeed quickly. The entire offensive line returns intact this season, which is an NFL rarity in the free-agency era. Ikem Ekwonu has solidified left tackle, which has been a problematic area for Carolina for years. Taylor Moton is a standout at right tackle, and center Bradley Bozeman will be an important resource for a rookie QB trying to figure out protections.

Carolina also has signed quarterback Andy Dalton. Dalton is supposed to mentor Young, but don't be surprised if he starts a few games, too — either at the beginning if Young isn't ready, or at some point during the season due to injury. Dalton is a steadying force who has started at least six games in all 12 of his NFL seasons.

Running back Miles Sanders signed in the offseason to help the Panthers replace Christian McCaffrey, the All-Pro back Carolina traded to San Francisco in October for four draft picks. Sanders is coming off a Pro Bowl season with Philadelphia. Although he was more of a run specialist with the Eagles last season, Carolina sees Sanders as a three-down back who can catch the ball out of the backfield when given the chance.

The receivers are in flux. With leading receiver DJ Moore gone to Chicago in the trade made to move up and acquire Young at No. 1, Carolina has revamped its pass-catchers in a big way. Veteran Adam Thielen will likely play the slot, with DJ Chark Jr. the primary speed guy and Terrace Marshall Jr. seeing a bigger role after he had a few flashes last year. Second-round pick Jonathan Mingo will have a chance to contribute quickly. Hayden Hurst signed to be the primary pass-catching tight end, with Ian Thomas remaining the blocking tight end.

But so much of it is going to ride on Young, the former Alabama QB who won a Heisman Trophy with the Crimson Tide. The Panthers chose him despite his less than ideal size — Young is 5-foot-10. "I can't get taller," he said just before the NFL Draft. The team has made its peace with his height; Panthers general manager Scott Fitterer notes that Young had only two footballs batted down at the line of scrimmage during his final season at Alabama. The Panthers



BOB DONNAN-USA TODAY SPORTS

do want to bulk him up some. Young weighed in at the NFL Scouting Combine at 204, but his natural weight may be 10 pounds lighter.

DEFENSE

The Panthers are switching to a 3-4 this year under new defensive coordinator Ejiro Evero, which means a number of things. For one, the Panthers should be able to disguise blitzes a little better, and perhaps they will be able to find a sackmate for Brian Burns.

Burns had a career-high 12.5 sacks in 2022, and at 25, he would certainly like to break the Panthers' single-season record of 15.0 this year. He seems capable of doing so if he gets some pass-rushing help from Marquis Haynes Sr., Frankie Luvu and Derrick Brown, all of whom have a knack for getting to the quarterback.

Brown and Burns were the two players other than Moore whom Chicago really coveted in the Young trade; Carolina wasn't willing to part with either. Brown, a former first-round draft pick like Burns, has Pro Bowl potential and can be a disruptor up the middle.

Veteran linebacker Shaq Thompson restructured his contract to remain a Panther in the offseason, which will help from a leadership standpoint, although he has lost a step. Nose tackle Shy Tuttle and defensive end DeShawn Williams are veterans brought in to help implement the 3-4 properly and to allow Thompson and rover Jeremy Chinn — a hybrid player who will line up closer to the line of scrimmage this year — to fly around and make tackles.

The secondary will be decent if shutdown cornerback Jaycee Horn can stay healthy — he's played in only about 50 percent of the games over his first two seasons. Donte Jackson and CJ Henderson have also dealt frequently with injuries but have some talent. Safety Vonn Bell is new to the team and is tasked both with adding more edge to the secondary and toughening this group up.

SPECIALISTS

Although many Carolina fans continue to remember placekicker Eddy Piñeiro for the two kicks he missed in 2022 against Atlanta — a 48-yard extra point and then a 32-yard field goal — that would have won the game, in reality he had such a good 2022 season that the team has signed him again for 2023. Piñeiro was 33-for-35 in 2022 and is a reliable kicker from 50 yards and in.

The Panthers' special teams are one of the most stable units on the squad, as punter Johnny Hekker also shouldn't face any meaningful training camp competition. Kickoff returner Chuba Hubbard and punt returner Shi Smith aren't dazzling but aren't bad. Long snapper J.J. Jansen, the longest-tenured Panther in history, returns for his 16th NFL season.

FINAL ANALYSIS

It all goes as the quarterback goes for the Panthers. Ever since T.J. Watt drilled Cam Newton's throwing shoulder midway through the 2018 season, Carolina hasn't been the same. Rhule was fired because he never could get the QB position right — Teddy Bridgewater, Sam Darnold and Baker Mayfield all came and went without making much of a dent.

Young represents a sea change in how the Panthers approach the position. They had been trying the free-agency market, hoping to get lucky with a veteran, for several years. Now they've gone back to the original model, the one that worked (for awhile) with Kerry Collins in 1995 and then Cam Newton in 2011. You draft a QB high, you develop him, you put a good team around him and he gets you to the playoffs. It might not happen this year with Young. But if he has a Rookie of the Year-type of performance, it will.

2022 RESULTS (7-10)

Sept. 11	Cleveland	L	24-26
Sept. 18	at N.Y. Giants	L	16-19
Sept. 25	New Orleans	W	22-14
Oct. 2	Arizona	L	16-26
Oct. 9	San Francisco	L	15-37
Oct. 16	at L.A. Rams	L	10-24
Oct. 23	Tampa Bay	W	21-3
Oct. 30	at Atlanta (ot)	L	34-37
Nov. 6	at Cincinnati	L	21-42
Nov. 10	Atlanta	W	25-15
Nov. 20	at Baltimore	L	3-13
Nov. 27	Denver	W	23-10
Dec. 11	at Seattle	W	30-24
Dec. 18	Pittsburgh	L	16-24
Dec. 24	Detroit	W	37-23
Jan. 1	at Tampa Bay	L	24-30
Jan. 8	at New Orleans	W	10-7

2022 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	306.2	29	15
Rushing	130.0	10	7
Passing	176.2	29	14
Scoring	20.4	20	10
Third Down %	31.7	30	16
EPA/Play	-0.036	T21	T11
TO Differential	-4	T24	T12

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	350.2	22	10
Rushing	122.6	18	7
Passing	227.5	22	12
Scoring	22.0	19	9
Interceptions	10	T24	T11
Sacks	35	T25	13
EPA/Play	0.010	17	8

2022 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Baker Mayfield	206	119	1,313	6	6
Sam Darnold	140	82	1,143	7	3
P.J. Walker	106	63	731	3	3

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
D'Onta Foreman	203	914	4.5	5
Chuba Hubbard	95	466	4.9	2
Christian McCaffrey	85	393	4.6	2

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
DJ Moore	63	888	14.1	7
Christian McCaffrey	33	277	8.4	1
Terrace Marshall Jr.	28	490	17.5	1
Laviska Shenault Jr.	27	272	10.1	1

KICKING: Eddy Piñeiro, 33-35 FGs, 30-32 PAT, 129 points
TACKLES: Shaq Thompson, 135; Frankie Luvu, 111
SACKS: Brian Burns, 12.5; Frankie Luvu, 7.0
INTERCEPTIONS: Jaycee Horn, 3; CJ Henderson, 2; Donte Jackson, 2

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

PARTY LIKE IT'S 1995 In one of the weirder turns of events ever for the Panthers, they hired the team's first-ever starting quarterback, Frank Reich, as the team's head coach 28 years later. Reich started the first three games in Carolina's history in 1995, going 0-3 before being replaced by rookie Kerry Collins. Reich's career at Carolina lasted only one year, but his connections with Charlotte lasted much longer, and for a while he served as president of a theological seminary in the area and later pastored his own church. At the news conference announcing him as new head coach, a half-dozen of Reich's former 1995 teammates with the Panthers showed up.

THIELEN'S ARRIVAL The Panthers get to be a part of one of the cooler NFL underdog stories from over the past decade this year, as **Adam Thielen** joins the team. Thielen was a local legend with the Minnesota Vikings, where he progressed from undrafted free agent to a player who scored 54 touchdowns in the NFL since 2016. Thielen will work primarily from the slot for Carolina. While he will be 33 by the time the season begins, the Panthers are betting he has gas left in the tank.

THE FOUNDER'S LEGACY One of the biggest funerals in Panther history occurred in the offseason shortly after the team's founder and original owner, Jerry Richardson, died at age 86 on March 1, 2023. Richardson owned the Panthers from their inception in 1995 until he sold the team in 2018 to Dave Tepper under pressure after a workplace misconduct scandal. Richardson's memorial service was held March 18 in front of about 1,000 people on the Wofford College campus in Spartanburg, S.C., and included Panther royalty like Cam Newton, Steve Smith Sr., Luke Kuechly and Greg Olsen. Richardson had a heart transplant in 2009 and survived for 14 more years.

SCOUTING THE PANTHERS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP CAROLINA "The Panthers made a bold move by trading a significant number of picks and starting wide receiver DJ Moore to the Chicago Bears for the first overall pick. They're banking on Bryce Young being a special quarterback. Although he's undersized, nearly historically small, Young is dynamic. He reminds me of Steph Curry. Young has great anticipation, is a student of the game and can slide in the pocket and create passing lanes. With a rookie, there's always growing pains, but this kid is mature and smart. I'm not betting against him being successful right away. … Young has enough weapons to succeed. He has solid wide receivers in Adam Thielen, DJ Chark Jr. and Terrace Marshall Jr., plus tight end Hayden Hurst. … Having an all-purpose back like Miles Sanders more than adequately replaces D'Onta Foreman. … A year later, that Ikem Ekwonu pick is looking pretty good. … Jonathan Mingo could quickly climb the wide receiver depth chart. … Brian Burns is slippery at the line of scrimmage. He's got twitchy pass-rushing skills, and he's tough for a leaner guy. … Derrick Brown is stout inside. He's really difficult to budge and he's pretty disruptive. … I still like Jeremy Chinn. He gets things done. … The comeback of Jaycee Horn is critical to this defense. He's the difference between solid and good. … Shaq Thompson's leadership and tackling skills are vital. … Frankie Luvu keeps beating the odds, year after year."

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2023 PANTHERS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS.	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
2 Corral, Matt	QB	6-2	205	1	Ole Miss	D3-22	D3-Car-22
14 Dalton, Andy	QB	6-2	220	12	TCU	FA-NO-23	D2-Cin-11
11 Eason, Jacob	QB	6-6	230	2	Washington	FA-23	D4-Ind-20

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
20 Blackshear, Raheem	RB	5-9	190	1	Virginia Tech	FA-22	FA-Buf-22
41 Brown, Spencer	RB	6-0	220	1	UAB	FA-22	FA-Car-21
30 Hubbard, Chuba	RB	6-1	210	2	Oklahoma State	D4-21	D4-Car-21
6 Sanders, Miles	RB	5-11	211	4	Penn State	FA-Phi-23	D2a-Phi-19

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
18 Byrd, Damiere	WR	5-9	172	6	South Carolina	FA-Atl-23	FA-Car-15
17 Chark Jr., DJ	WR	6-4	205	5	LSU	FA-Det-23	D2-Jac-18
81 Hurst, Hayden	TE	6-4	250	5	South Carolina	FA-Cin-23	D1a-Bal-18
88 Marshall Jr., Terrace	WR	6-2	200	2	LSU	D2-21	D2-Car-21
45 Ricci, Giovanni	TE	6-3	240	2	Western Michigan	FA-20	FA-Car-20
81 Saunders, C.J.	WR	5-10	190	1	Ohio State	FA-22	FA-Car-21
5 Shenault Jr., Laviska	WR	6-1	220	3	Colorado	T-Jac-22	D2-Jac-20
12 Smith, Shi	WR	5-10	190	2	South Carolina	D6b-21	D6b-Car-21
84 Sullivan, Stephen	TE	6-5	245	1	LSU	FA-20	D7-Sea-20
19 Thielen, Adam	WR	6-2	200	9	Minnesota State	FA-Min-23	FA-Min-13
80 Thomas, Ian	TE	6-4	260	5	Indiana	D4a-18	D4a-Car-18
82 Tremble, Tommy	TE	6-4	250	2	Notre Dame	D3b-21	D3b-Car-21
16 Williams, Preston	WR	6-5	220	4	Colorado State	FA-22	FA-Mia-19
83 Wright, Derek	WR	6-1	195	1	Utah State	FA-22	FA-Car-22

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
56 Bozeman, Bradley	C/G	6-5	325	5	Alabama	FA-Bal-22	D6c-Bal-18
77 Brown, Deonte	G	6-4	335	2	Alabama	FA-22	D6a-Car-21
70 Christensen, Brady	T	6-6	300	2	BYU	D3a-21	D3a-Car-21
74 Coleman, Larnel	T	6-6	307	2	UMass	FA-22	D7-Mia-21
63 Corbett, Austin	G	6-4	305	5	Nevada	FA-LAR-22	D2a-Cle-18
79 Ekwonu, Ikem	T	6-4	320	1	NC State	D1-22	D1-Car-22
75 Erving, Cameron	T	6-5	315	8	Florida State	FA-Dal-21	D1-Cle-15
66 Mays, Cade	G	6-6	325	1	Tennessee	D6b-22	D6b-Car-22
64 McCray, Justin	G	6-3	315	6	UCF	FA-Hou-23	FA-Ten-14
72 Moton, Taylor	T	6-5	325	6	Western Michigan	D2b-17	D2b-Car-17
68 Tecklenburg, Sam	C	6-4	310	2	Baylor	FA-22	FA-Car-20

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
94 Anderson, Henry	DE	6-6	300	8	Stanford	FA-22	D3-Ind-15
95 Brown, Derrick	DT	6-5	320	3	Auburn	D1-20	D1-Car-20
78 McCall, Marquan	DT	6-3	345	1	Kentucky	FA-22	FA-Car-22
93 Roy, Bravvion	DT	6-1	330	3	Baylor	D6-20	D6-Car-20
99 Tuttle, Shy	DT	6-3	300	4	Tennessee	FA-NO-23	FA-NO-19
96 Williams, DeShawn	DL	6-1	291	5	Clemson	FA-Den-23	FA-Cin-15
92 Williams, Raequan	DT	6-4	305	2	Michigan State	FA-22	FA-Phi-20

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
90 Barno, Amaré	LB	6-6	245	1	Virginia Tech	D6a-22	D6a-Car-22
53 Burns, Brian	LB	6-5	250	4	Florida State	D1-19	D1-Car-19
97 Gross-Matos, Yetur	LB	6-5	265	3	Penn State	D2a-20	D2a-Car-20
54 Grugier-Hill, Kamu	LB	6-2	230	7	Eastern Illinois	FA-Ari-23	D6-NE-16
98 Haynes Sr., Marquis	LB	6-2	235	5	Ole Miss	D4b-18	D4b-Car-18
91 Jones, Kobe	LB	6-3	255	1	Mississippi State	FA-22	FA-Atl-21
49 Luvu, Frankie	LB	6-3	235	5	Washington State	FA-NYJ-21	FA-NYJ-18
46 Mosby, Arron	LB	6-2	245	1	Fresno State	FA-22	FA-Car-22
40 Smith, Brandon	LB	6-3	240	1	Penn State	D4-22	D4-Car-22
7 Thompson, Shaq	LB	6-0	230	8	Washington	D1-15	D1-Car-15
50 Wooten, Chandler	LB	6-3	232	1	Auburn	FA-22	FA-Car-22

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
24 Bell, Vonn	S	5-11	215	7	Ohio State	FA-Cin-23	D2b-NO-16
27 Carrie, T.J.	CB	6-0	208	9	Ohio	FA-22	D7a-LV-14
21 Chinn, Jeremy	S	6-3	220	3	Southern Illinois	D2b-20	D2b-Car-20
33 Dorn, Myles	S	6-2	210	2	North Carolina	FA-23	FA-Min-20
42 Franklin Jr., Sam	S	6-3	210	3	Temple	FA-20	FA-Car-20
36 Harper, Madre	CB	6-1	195	2	Southern Illinois	FA-22	FA-LV-20
23 Henderson, CJ	CB	6-1	205	3	Florida	T-Jac-21	D1-Jac-20
8 Horn, Jaycee	CB	6-1	200	2	South Carolina	D1-21	D1-Car-21
36 Miller, Herb	CB	6-1	201	2	Florida Atlantic	FA-23	FA-KC-19
26 Jackson, Donte	CB	5-10	180	5	LSU	D2-18	D2-Car-18
29 Robinson, Kenny	S	6-2	200	3	West Virginia	FA-22	D5-Car-20
20 Rowe, Eric	S	6-1	210	8	Utah	FA-Mia-23	D2-Phi-15
28 Taylor Jr., Keith	CB	6-3	195	2	Washington	D5b-21	D5b-Car-21
27 Thomas-Oliver, Stantley	CB	6-0	190	3	FIU	D7-20	D7-Car-20
25 Woods, Xavier	S	5-11	200	6	Louisiana Tech	FA-Min-22	D6-Dal-17

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
10 Hekker, Johnny	P	6-5	225	11	Oregon State	FA-LAR-22	FA-LAR-12
44 Jansen, JJ	LS	6-2	235	15	Notre Dame	T-GB-09	FA-GB-08
4 Piñeiro, Eddy	K	5-11	190	4	Florida	FA-22	FA-LV-18

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	88	Terrace Marshall Jr.	5	Laviska Shenault Jr.
WR	17	DJ Chark Jr.	15	Jonathan Mingo (R)
WR	19	Adam Thielen	12	Shi Smith
LT	79	Ikem Ekwonu	64	Cade Mays
LG	70	Brady Christensen	62	Chandler Zavala (R)
C	56	Bradley Bozeman	68	Sam Tecklenburg
RG	63	Austin Corbett	64	Cade Mays
RT	72	Taylor Moton	70	Brady Christensen
TE	81	Hayden Hurst	80	Ian Thomas
QB	9	Bryce Young (R)	14	Andy Dalton
RB	6	Miles Sanders	30	Chuba Hubbard

DEFENSE

DE	96	DeShawn Williams	78	Marquan McCall
NT	99	Shy Tuttle	93	Bravvion Roy
DE	95	Derrick Brown	94	Henry Anderson
OLB	53	Brian Burns	90	Amaré Barno
ILB	7	Shaq Thompson	40	Brandon Smith
ILB	49	Frankie Luvu	54	Kamu Grugier-Hill
OLB	98	Marquis Haynes Sr.	97	Yetur Gross-Matos
CB	26	Donte Jackson	23	CJ Henderson
CB	8	Jaycee Horn	27	Stantley Thomas-Oliver III
SS	21	Jeremy Chinn	25	Xavier Woods
FS	24	Vonn Bell	20	Eric Rowe

SPECIALISTS

K	4	Eddy Piñeiro	KR 30	Chuba Hubbard
P	10	Johnny Hekker	PR 12	Shi Smith

5.0

Miles Sanders averaged 5.0 yards per carry during four seasons with the Eagles. The Panthers averaged 4.6 yards per carry as a team last season.

PANTHERS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1	Bryce Young	QB	5-10	204	Alabama
2	Jonathan Mingo	WR	6-2	220	Mississippi
3	DJ Johnson	Edge	6-4	260	Oregon
4	Chandler Zavala	G	6-3	322	NC State
5	Jammie Robinson	S	5-11	190	Florida State

This draft will live and die on Bryce Young's performance because you don't get the No. 1 overall pick very often. Young, terrific in every way except for his 5-foot-10 size, should start almost right away. Jonathan Mingo is a big target the Panthers wanted to give their rookie QB more weaponry. DJ Johnson is an iffy pick with good athleticism who wasn't productive in college. Chandler Zavala will have a chance to contribute right away due to injuries to both Panthers starting guards.

NO SAINTS

NFC SOUTH FORECAST

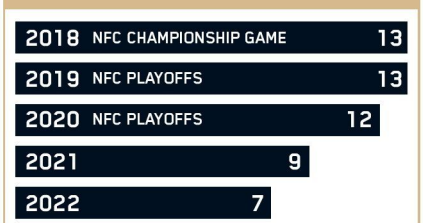
2

2023 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 10	Tennessee	1:00
Sept. 18	at Carolina	8:15
Sept. 24	at Green Bay	1:00
Oct. 1	Tampa Bay	1:00
Oct. 8	at New England	1:00)
Oct. 15	at Houston	1:00
Oct. 19	Jacksonville	8:15
Oct. 29	at Indianapolis	1:00
Nov. 5	Chicago	1:00
Nov. 12	at Minnesota	1:00
Nov. 19	BYE	
Nov. 26	at Atlanta	1:00
Dec. 3	Detroit	1:00
Dec. 10	Carolina	1:00
Dec. 17	N.Y. Giants	1:00
Dec. 21	at L.A. Rams	8:15
Dec. 31	at Tampa Bay	1:00
Jan. 7	Atlanta	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND



THE COACHES

Head Coach: Dennis Allen
Record With Team: 7-10
Career Record: 15-38
Offensive Coordinator: Pete Carmichael
Defensive Coordinator: Joe Woods
Special Teams Coordinator: Darren Rizzi
Passing Game Coordinator/Quarterbacks: Ronald Curry
Running Backs: Joel Thomas
Tight Ends: Clancy Barone
Wide Receivers: Kodi Burns
Offensive Line: Doug Marrione
Defensive Line: Todd Grantham
Defensive Line: Todd Grantham
Pass Rush Specialist: Bryan Young
Secondary: Marcus Robertson

Even after missing the playoffs for two consecutive seasons, the New Orleans Saints are convinced that they're right on the brink of breaking through.

The team addressed its biggest problem in March when it handed free-agent quarterback Derek Carr a four-year, $150 million contract, a move it hopes will end the middling stretch it has endured since future Hall of Famer Drew Brees' retirement.

New Orleans is banking on Carr being a better version of the player he was with the Las Vegas Raiders. In pairing him with what figures to be another strong defense, the team sees opportunity in the NFC South, a division that failed to produce a team with a winning record in 2022.

OFFENSE

The Saints haven't been good offensively for two years now, but it's worth wondering how far off they are. What is surprising is that New Orleans has gotten the most out of average quarterbacks in each of the past two seasons.

Jameis Winston was in the midst of his best professional season in 2021 (14 touchdowns, three interceptions) before an ACL injury. Last year, 35-year-old journeyman Andy Dalton played at a sneaky-high level, ranking 13th in offensive DVOA (ahead of Justin Herbert and Lamar Jackson). What if New Orleans is able to extract big improvement out of someone like Carr, whose production never quite matched his potential with the dysfunctional Raiders?

The Saints are counting on that, and they've made moves this offseason to surround Carr with what he needs to succeed.

First up was convincing receiver Michael Thomas to return at a reduced salary. Thomas looked like he was on the way out after missing almost all of the past three seasons with various injuries. But the Saints believe he's still an impact receiver, evidenced by the numbers he put up in the opening two games (11 catches, 122 yards, three touchdowns) last season before he dislocated his toe in Week 3.

If Thomas can finally show signs of his old self, New Orleans can pair his ability to move the chains with two fleet-footed youngsters in Chris Olave and Rashid Shaheed, who combined for 100 catches, 1,530 yards and six touchdowns as rookies.

The Saints also beefed up their ground game, giving Alvin Kamara some needed help by signing Jamaal Williams, who scored an NFL-best 17 rushing touchdowns last season for the Lions, and drafting TCU's Kendre Miller in the third round.

Kamara likely will serve some sort of NFL suspension for violating the NFL's personal conduct policy stemming from a 2022 arrest in Las Vegas, but he should no longer need to be miscast as a bell-cow back, freeing him up to return to his more dynamic role. The last time Kamara was in a true timeshare, in 2020, he racked up career highs in scrimmage yards (1,688) and touchdowns (21).

The Saints also are returning their top eight offensive linemen from last year's team. The big question there is whether second-year left tackle Trevor Penning is ready to live up to his mammoth potential after a pair of significant foot injuries effectively wiped out his rookie season.

There are a lot of "ifs" to consider with the Saints offense. But if they can get more out of Carr, if Thomas is finally over his injury history, if Kamara can rediscover his best self and if the Saints aren't devastated by injuries along the offensive line — there is potential here for an excellent offense.

DEFENSE

The coaching staff provides the most stark difference between last year's Saints defense and this year's. Head coach Dennis Allen tried to keep his assistants happy last season, promoting Ryan Nielsen and Kris Richard to share the coordinator position he vacated when the Saints named him head coach. Though the unit enjoyed another strong season, ranking fifth in total defense, this relationship didn't pan out. Nielsen left to take the Falcons' defensive coordinator (and play-caller) role. Richard and the Saints mutually parted ways.

CHRIS OLAVE
WIDE RECEIVER

In response, Allen infused the unit with experience. He hired former Browns defensive coordinator Joe Woods (19 prior seasons as an NFL coach, five as a coordinator); brought in longtime SEC defensive coordinator Todd Grantham (33 years as a coach, 15 as a coordinator across both college and the NFL) to coach the defensive line; and hired Marcus Robertson (12 years as an NFL player, 16 years as an NFL coach) to coach the secondary.

To help shore up a suddenly suspect run defense (24th in 2022), New Orleans let its starting defensive tackle tandem from last season (David Onyemata and Shy Tuttle) walk in free agency — to division rivals Atlanta and Carolina, respectively, no less — and chose instead to rebuild their interior.

Rookie Bryan Bresee, the 29th overall pick, figures to anchor the unit as a true 3-technique, pairing explosive athleticism with his 6-foot-5, 305-pound frame. The Saints lacked a disruptive playmaker along their defensive interior, and they hope Bresee can provide the spark they were missing.

After defensive end Marcus Davenport spent five seasons flirting with but never quite reaching his potential, the Saints decided not to bring him back in 2023. Instead, the team used a second-round pick on Notre Dame defensive end Isaiah Foskey, whose size and athleticism profile is eerily similar to Davenport's. Foskey, however, was much more productive at the major college level, with 22 sacks and seven forced fumbles his final two years.

The rest of the defense should look similar to the unit that finished last season ranked second in the NFL against the pass (allowing just 184.4 yards per game) and tied for fifth in sacks (48). The secondary should again be a strength, especially if lockdown corner Marshon Lattimore is fully recovered from an abdominal injury that cost him 10 games last season.

The key for New Orleans is forcing more turnovers. What has long been a strength slipped in 2022, as the Saints produced just 14 takeaways. Only the Raiders forced fewer turnovers.

SPECIALISTS

The Saints brought the same specialists back from last year, with the hope that all can bounce back from a down season. After missing the 2021 season with a core muscle injury, Wil Lutz endured the worst season of his pro career, making just 74.2 percent of his field-goal attempts. Punter Blake Gillikin was not only inconsistent, but he also saw both his gross (46.4) and net (41.4) punting averages decline while his touchbacks (seven) nearly doubled. For the moment, Shaheed is expected to handle return duties, but New Orleans may trot someone else out there to allow Shaheed to focus on his offensive role.

FINAL ANALYSIS

With Carr in the fold and a healthy roster, the Saints are a threat to win the weakened NFC South, but their peers are catching up to them. This season figures to be crucial in determining the franchise's direction.

The roster has been buoyed by the successes of the 2017 draft class, but it is getting older and more difficult to maintain thanks to the team's aggressive management of the salary cap — a problem that is not going away.

Another disappointing season could force the team to reevaluate whether its model is really sustainable, especially with former head coach Sean Payton now working the Denver Broncos sidelines. In other words, if the Saints' big bet on Carr doesn't work, the immediate future could be murky in New Orleans.

ERIC HARTLINE-USA TODAY SPORTS

2022 RESULTS (7-10)

Sept.	11	at Atlanta	W	27-26
Sept.	18	Tampa Bay	L	10-20
Sept.	25	at Carolina	L	14-22
Oct.	2	vs. Minnesota	L	25-28
Oct.	9	Seattle	W	39-32
Oct.	16	Cincinnati	L	26-30
Oct.	20	at Arizona	L	34-42
Oct.	30	Las Vegas	W	24-0
Nov.	7	Baltimore	L	13-27
Nov.	13	at Pittsburgh	L	10-20
Nov.	20	L.A. Rams	W	27-20
Nov.	27	at San Francisco	L	0-13
Dec.	5	at Tampa Bay	L	16-17
Dec.	18	Atlanta	W	21-18
Dec.	24	at Cleveland	W	17-10
Jan.	1	at Philadelphia	W	20-10
Jan.	8	Carolina	L	7-10

2022 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	333.8	19	10
Rushing	116.6	19	12
Passing	217.2	16	8
Scoring	19.4	22	12
Third Down %	40.2	15	8
EPA/Play	-0.036	T21	T11
TO Differential	-11	31	15

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	314.8	5	4
Rushing	130.5	24	11
Passing	184.4	2	2
Scoring	20.3	9	5
Interceptions	7	30	15
Sacks	48	T5	3
EPA/Play	-0.035	10	5

2022 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Andy Dalton	378	252	2,871	18	9
Jameis Winston	115	73	858	4	5

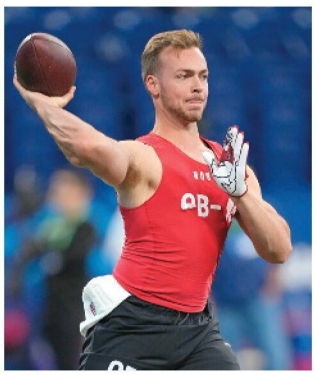
RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Alvin Kamara	223	897	4.0	2
Taysom Hill	96	575	6.0	7
Mark Ingram II	62	233	3.8	1

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Chris Olave	72	1,042	14.5	4
Alvin Kamara	57	490	8.6	2
Juwan Johnson	42	508	12.1	7
Rashid Shaheed	28	488	17.4	2
Jarvis Landry	25	272	10.9	1

KICKING: Wil Lutz, 23-31 FGs, 33-33 PAT, 102 points
TACKLES: Demario Davis, 109; Tyrann Mathieu, 91
SACKS: Cameron Jordan, 8.5; Kaden Elliss, 7.0
INTERCEPTIONS: Tyrann Mathieu, 3; Daniel Sorensen, 2

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

REUNITED Dennis Allen was the Raiders head coach back in 2014 when the team drafted Derek Carr in the second round. Now, nearly a decade later, they're back together and trying to make good on the second acts of their careers. As Allen said at Carr's introductory press conference, "It's time for us to go finish what we started."



MEANT TO BE Rookie quarterback **Jake Haener** is from Northern California, but he grew up a Saints fan because of Drew Brees and wore No. 9 at Fresno State as an homage to the Saints legend. Shortly after the Saints picked him in the fourth round, Haener remarked on that lifelong fandom. "That is just so unbelievable. I literally would wear Drew Brees jerseys, I'd wear Saints beanies. Having an opportunity to go play in New Orleans is literally going to be a dream come true."

STREAK CONTINUES The Saints got into position to draft Haener by sending a future fourth-round pick to the Jacksonville Jaguars. Fans of the Saints weren't surprised by the move: New Orleans has traded up at least once in 10 consecutive drafts, and each of its previous 25 draft-day trades have been to move up.

GOTTA CATCH 'EM ALL New Saints running back Jamaal Williams wore a Pokémon-themed hat as he signed his three-year contract, then kept it on his head for the length of his introductory press conference. The character: Eevee.

WELCOME TO TOWN The Saints made sure the cameras were rolling when Williams sampled boiled crawfish for the first time. The incredulous look on teammate and New Orleans native Tyrann Mathieu's face when Williams suggested the local delicacy needed some barbecue sauce was worth it.

SCOUTING THE SAINTS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP NEW ORLEANS "New Orleans finally has a legit quarterback. Signing Derek Carr restores confidence in the offense. Carr is more than capable of putting up big numbers in this offense. He's got Chris Olave, a finally-healthy Michael Thomas and Juwan Johnson to throw to. I see Carr as a strong fit for what they want to do offensively. They need Carr to generate the kind of production the Raiders were looking for and occasionally he delivered on. A change of scenery should help Carr a lot. … I wonder what's going to happen with Alvin Kamara's legal situation in Las Vegas. That looks like an eventual suspension waiting to happen. … That offensive line is tough, especially Trevor Penning, Ryan Ramczyk and Erik McCoy. I like the way they're going about building their line, stockpiling good blockers. … If Dennis Allen doesn't get things going in the right direction, the whispers will be getting louder that they'll be looking for a new coach. … I'm liking the Bryan Bresee draft pick. He can help them right away. He's been through a ton off the field, and he's got all the right intangibles to overcome that and excel on the field. … Pretty decent linebacking corps, especially Demario Davis. He just keeps rolling every year. … Honey Badger (Tyrann Mathieu) has still got it. … I envision Isaiah Foskey playing a lot as a rookie. … Payton Turner has been a bust so far. The guy just can't get or stay healthy."

KIRBY LEE-USA TODAY SPORTS

2023 SAINTS VETERAN ROSTER

	QUARTERBACKS	POS.	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
4	Carr, Derek	QB	6-3	215	9	Fresno State	FA-LV-23	D2-LV-14
16	Luton, Jake	QB	6-6	224	2	Oregon State	FA-22	D6-Jac-20
2	Winston, Jameis	QB	6-4	231	8	Florida State	FA-TB-20	D1-TB-15
	RUNNING BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
31	Benjamin, Eno	RB	5-9	207	2	Arizona State	W-Hou-22	D7-Ari-20
44	Gore, Derrick	RB	5-9	206	2	ULM	FA-22	FA-LAC-19
41	Kamara, Alvin	RB	5-10	215	6	Tennessee	D3a-17	D3a-NO-17
46	Prentice, Adam	FB	6-0	245	2	South Carolina	W-Den-21	FA-Den-21
24	Washington, Dwayne	RB	6-1	223	7	Washington	FA-18	D7-Det-16
30	Williams, Jamaal	RB	6-0	224	6	BYU	FA-Det-23	D4b-GB-17
	RECEIVERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
15	Baker, Kawaan	WR	6-1	198	1	South Alabama	D7-21	D7-NO-21
	Edwards, Bryan	WR	6-3	215	3	South Carolina	FA-23	D3b-LV-20
86	Forristall, Miller	TE	6-5	245	1	Alabama	FA-23	FA-Ten-21
7	Hill, Taysom	TE	6-2	221	6	BYU	W-GB-17	FA-GB-17
83	Johnson, Juwan	TE	6-4	231	3	Oregon	FA-20	FA-NO-20
18	Kirkwood, Keith	WR	6-3	210	4	Temple	FA-22	FA-NO-18
87	Krull, Lucas	TE	6-6	260	1	Pittsburgh	FA-22	FA-NO-22
33	Merritt, Kirk	WR	6-1	214	1	Arkansas State	FA-21	FA-Mia-20
	Moreau, Foster	TE	6-4	250	4	LSU	FA-LV-23	D4c-LV-19
12	Olave, Chris	WR	6-0	187	1	Ohio State	D1a-22	D1a-NO-22
22	Shaheed, Rashid	WR	6-0	180	1	Weber State	FA-22	FA-NO-22
10	Smith, Tre'Quan	WR	6-2	210	5	UCF	D3-18	D3-NO-18
13	Thomas, Michael	WR	6-3	212	7	Ohio State	D2a-16	D2a-NO-16
	OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
79	Durant, Yasir	G	6-7	330	3	Missouri	FA-22	FA-KC-20
74	Hurst, James	OL	6-5	310	9	North Carolina	FA-20	FA-Bal-14
66	Kidd, Lewis	OL	6-6	311	1	Montana State	FA-22	FA-NO-22
60	Martin, Koda	OL	6-6	304	1	Syracuse	FA-23	FA-LAC-19
78	McCoy, Erik	C/G	6-4	303	4	Texas A&M	D2-19	D2-NO-19
72	Norton, Storm	T	6-7	317	3	Toledo	FA-LAC-23	FA-Det-17
75	Peat, Andrus	G/T	6-7	316	8	Stanford	D1a-15	D1a-NO-15
70	Penning, Trevor	T	6-7	325	1	Northern Iowa	D1b-22	D1b-NO-22
71	Ramczyk, Ryan	T	6-6	314	6	Wisconsin	D1b-17	D1b-NO-17
51	Ruiz, Cesar	C/G	6-4	316	3	Michigan	D1-20	D1-NO-20
76	Throckmorton, Calvin	OL	6-5	309	2	Oregon	FA-20	FA-NO-20
67	Young, Landon	T	6-7	321	2	Kentucky	D6-21	D6-NO-21
	DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
57	Emili, Prince	DT	6-2	300	1	Pennsylvania	FA-22	FA-Buf-22
96	Granderson, Carl	DE	6-5	261	4	Wyoming	FA-19	FA-NO-19
59	Jackson, Jordan	DT	6-4	294	1	Air Force	D6-22	D6-NO-22
94	Jordan, Cameron	DE	6-4	287	12	California	D1a-11	D1a-NO-11
90	Kpassagnon, Tanoh	DE	6-7	289	6	Villanova	FA-KC-21	D2-KC-17
97	Roach, Malcolm	DL	6-3	290	3	Texas	FA-20	FA-NO-20
99	Saunders, Khalen	DT	6-0	324	4	Western Illinois	FA-KC-23	D3-KC-19
93	Shepherd, Nathan	DL	6-4	315	5	Fort Hays State	FA-NYJ-23	D3-NYJ-18
98	Turner, Payton	DE	6-6	270	2	Houston	D1-21	D1-NO-21
69	Zuniga, Jabari	DE	6-3	264	2	Florida	FA-22	D3-NYJ-20
	LINEBACKERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
53	Baun, Zack	LB	6-3	225	3	Wisconsin	D3a-20	D3a-NO-20
43	Connelly, Ryan	LB	6-2	234	4	Wisconsin	FA-23	D5-NYG-19
56	Davis, Demario	LB	6-2	248	11	Arkansas State	FA-NYJ-18	D3-NYJ-12
50	Dowell, Andrew	LB	6-1	225	2	Michigan State	FA-19	FA-Dal-19
52	Jackson, D'Marco	LB	6-1	233	1	Appalachian State	D5-22	D5-NO-22
45	Sewell, Nephi	LB	6-0	228	1	Utah	FA-22	FA-NO-22
58	Summers, Ty	LB	6-1	241	4	TCU	FA-22	D7-GB-19
20	Werner, Pete	LB	6-3	242	2	Ohio State	D2-21	D2-NO-21
	DEFENSIVE BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
24	Abram, Johnathan	S	5-11	205	4	Mississippi State	FA-Sea-23	D1c-LV-19
29	Adebo, Paulson	CB	6-1	192	2	Stanford	D3-21	D3-NO-21
39	Amadi, Ugo	S	5-9	201	4	Oregon	FA-KC-23	D4-Sea-19
48	Gray, J.T.	DB	6-0	202	5	Mississippi State	FA-18	FA-NO-18
35	Gray, Vincent	DB	6-2	192	1	Michigan	FA-22	FA-NO-22
19	Harris Jr., Chris	DB	5-10	199	12	Kansas	FA-22	FA-Den-11
28	Johnson Jr., Lonnie	DB	6-2	213	4	Kentucky	FA-Ten-23	D2a-Hou-19
23	Lattimore, Marshon	CB	6-0	192	6	Ohio State	D1a-17	D1a-NO-17
32	Mathieu, Tyrann	S	5-9	190	10	LSU	FA-KC-22	D3-Ari-13
6	Maye, Marcus	S	6-0	207	6	Florida	FA-NYJ-22	D2-NYJ-17
38	Monday, Smoke	S	6-3	199	1	Auburn	FA-22	FA-NO-22
37	Pride Jr., Troy	CB	5-11	195	2	Notre Dame	FA-23	D4-Car-20
21	Roby, Bradley	CB	5-11	194	10	Ohio State	T-Hou-23	D1-Den-14
1	Taylor, Alontae	CB	6-1	199	1	Tennessee	D2-22	D2-NO-22
27	Yiadom, Isaac	CB	6-1	188	5	Boston College	FA-22	D3-Den-18
	SPECIALISTS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
5	Gillikin, Blake	P	6-2	196	3	Penn State	FA-20	FA-NO-20
3	Lutz, Wil	K	5-11	184	7	Georgia State	FA-16	FA-Bal-16
49	Wood, Zach	LS	6-3	255	6	SMU	FA-17	FA-Dal-16

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	12	Chris Olave	10	Tre'Quan Smith
WR	13	Michael Thomas	11	Bryan Edwards
WR	22	Rashid Shaheed	17	A.T. Perry (R)
LT	70	Trevor Penning	74	James Hurst
LG	75	Andrus Peat	64	Nick Saldiveri (R)
C	78	Eric McCoy	51	Cesar Ruiz
RG	51	Cesar Ruiz	76	Calvin Throckmorton
RT	71	Ryan Ramczyk	67	Landon Young
TE	83	Juwan Johnson	7	Taysom Hill
QB	4	Derek Carr	2	Jameis Winston
RB	41	Alvin Kamara	30	Jamaal Williams

DEFENSE

DE	94	Cameron Jordan	55	Isaiah Foskey (R)
DT	90	Bryan Bresee (R)	93	Nathan Shepherd
DT	99	Khalen Saunders	97	Malcolm Roach
DE	96	Carl Granderson	98	Payton Turner
SLB	53	Zack Baun	58	Anfernee Orji (R)
MLB	56	Demario Davis	52	D'Marco Jackson
WLB	20	Pete Werner	50	Andrew Dowell
CB	23	Marshon Lattimore	21	Bradley Roby
CB	29	Paulson Adebo	1	Alontae Taylor
SS	6	Marcus Maye	24	Jonathan Abram
FS	32	Tyrann Mathieu	28	Lonnie Johnson Jr.

SPECIALISTS

K	3	Wil Lutz	KR	22	Rashid Shaheed
P	5	Blake Gillikin	PR	22	Rashid Shaheed

181

The Saints generated only 181 first downs from receptions last season. To compare, the Chiefs led this category with 272.

SAINTS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: A

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Bryan Bresee	DT	6-5	305	Clemson
2.	Isaiah Foskey	DE	6-5	265	Notre Dame
3.	Kendre Miller	RB	6-0	220	TCU
4.	Nick Saldiveri	OL	6-6	316	Old Dominion
4.	Jake Haener	QB	6-1	200	Fresno State
5.	Jordan Howden	S	6-0	209	Minnesota
6.	A.T. Perry	WR	6-5	205	Wake Forest

New Orleans hit every target it was aiming for, all in the right spots. The Saints prioritized beefing up their defensive line early with Bryan Bresee and Isaiah Foskey, then used the middle rounds to build depth at some of their weaker roster spots. At the tail end of the draft, the Saints traded up to get A.T. Perry, a big target and a toolsy receiver who should make the club better. It would not be a surprise to see all these players make the roster and, outside of Jake Haener, for them all to contribute in some way this season.

TB BUCCANEERS

NFC SOUTH FORECAST
4

2023 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 10	at Minnesota	1:00
Sept. 17	Chicago	1:00
Sept. 25	Philadelphia	7:15
Oct. 1	at New Orleans	1:00
Oct. 8	BYE	
Oct. 15	Detroit	1:00
Oct. 22	Atlanta	1:00
Oct. 26	at Buffalo	8:15
Nov. 5	at Houston	1:00
Nov. 12	Tennessee	1:00
Nov. 19	at San Francisco	4:05
Nov. 26	at Indianapolis	1:00
Dec. 3	Carolina	1:00
Dec. 10	at Atlanta	1:00
Dec. 17	at Green Bay	1:00
Dec. 24	Jacksonville	4:05
Dec. 31	New Orleans	1:00
Jan. 7	at Carolina	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

THE COACHES

Head Coach: Todd Bowles
Record With Team: 8-9
Career Record: 34-50
Offensive Coordinator: Dave Canales
Defensive Coordinator: Todd Bowles
Special Teams Coordinator: Keith Armstrong
Assistant Head Coach/Run Game Coordinator: Harold Goodwin
Quarterbacks: Thaddeus Lewis
Running Backs: Skip Peete
Wide Receivers: Brad Idzik
Tight Ends: John Van Dam
Offensive Line: Joe Gilbert
Run Game Coordinator/Defensive Line: Kacy Rodgers
Pass Game Coordinator/Inside Linebackers: Larry Foote
Outside Linebackers: George Edwards
Cornerbacks: Kevin Ross
Safeties: Nick Rapone

After three consecutive playoff appearances, back-to-back division titles (a first in franchise history) and a second Lombardi Trophy, the Bucs head into the great unknown of the post-Tom Brady era. Now that the GOAT is retired (again, for good this time, we think), Tampa Bay is hoping that an overhaul of the offensive coaching staff, scheme and philosophy will be enough to match a defense full of returning veteran starters as they chase a third straight NFC South crown.

OFFENSE

Thanks in large part to salary cap constraints, the Bucs were forced to take the economical route to replacing Brady at quarterback for this season. Former No. 1 overall pick Baker Mayfield signed a one-year deal to compete with 2021 second-round draft pick Kyle Trask for the starting job, with Mayfield's experience likely to give him the inside track.

The biggest change for the offense is happening under the headsets, as former Seattle Seahawks quarterbacks coach/passing game coordinator Dave Canales replaces Byron Leftwich as Tampa Bay's play-caller. It's the first OC gig for Canales after 13 seasons under Pete Carroll in Seattle, but he brings a wide range of experience from many different schemes that had proven successful with the Seahawks, including the one that helped lead to Geno Smith's resurgence last season.

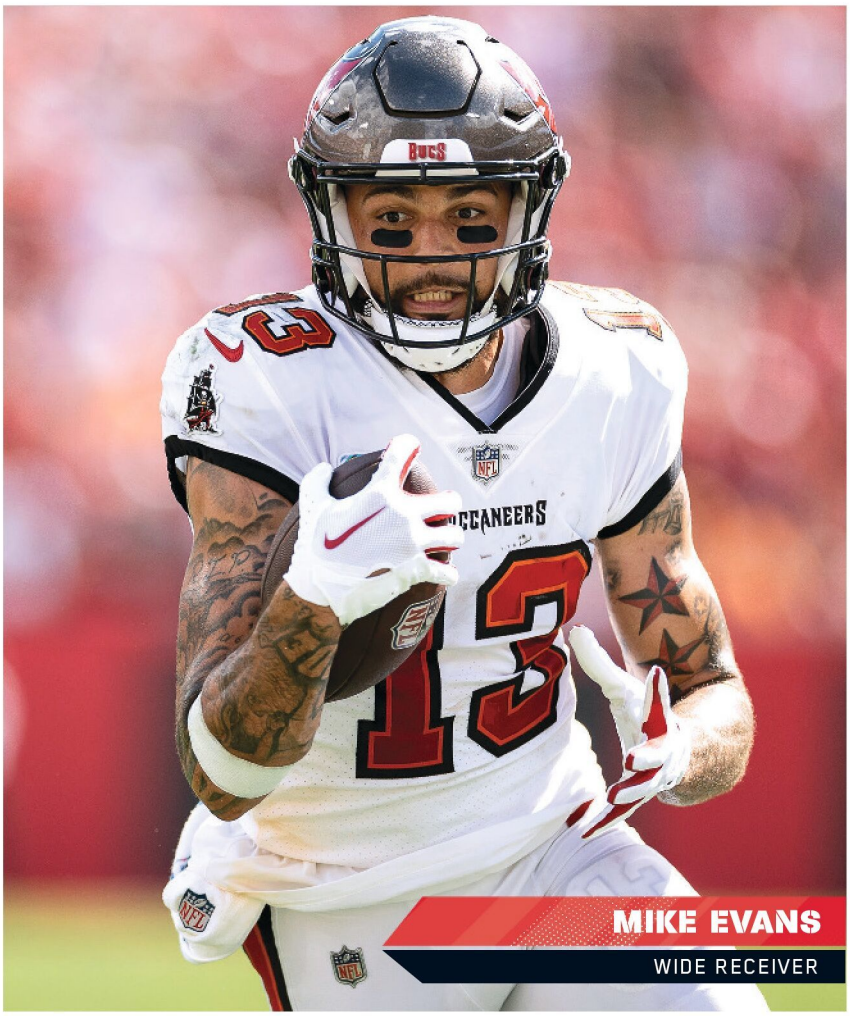
The rest of the personnel is highlighted by a pair of Pro Bowl wide receivers in Mike Evans and Chris Godwin, who should once again be one of the NFL's best pass-catching tandems. Russell Gage Jr. will be hoping to bounce back from an injury-riddled first season in Tampa Bay last year as the No. 3 receiver, while second-year tight end Cade Otton could be in for a breakout campaign. All of Tampa Bay's receiving threats will benefit from a change in scheme that should bring more creativity in getting receivers open and utilize play-action more frequently instead of relying on long-developing, vertical-heavy routes that require players to simply win their one-on-one matchups with regularity.

The offensive line boasts a two-time All-Pro in Tristan Wirfs, who is expected to shift from right to left tackle, replacing longtime starter Donovan Smith. Pro Bowl center Ryan Jensen also returns at full strength after missing the entire 2022 regular season with a knee injury suffered on the second day of training camp. There should be fierce competition for the other three starting spots up front, with 2022 second-round pick Luke Goedeke possibly replacing Wirfs at right tackle, where he played exclusively in college at Central Michigan. Aaron Stinnie, Nick Leverett, Robert Hainsey, Matt Feiler and second-round rookie Cody Mauch will battle it out for the starting guard spots on either side of Jensen, with Feiler also a possibility to push Goedeke for the right tackle job.

On the ground, the Bucs will be led by second-year back Rachaad White, who overtook Leonard Fournette as Tampa Bay's top runner halfway through his rookie campaign last season. Fournette was released in the offseason, leaving White as the clear-cut leader atop the depth chart. A smooth, shifty runner with great vision, patience and explosiveness, White should be a perfect fit for Canales' zone scheme.

DEFENSE

Despite the salary cap issues, the Bucs were able to keep their two biggest free agents this offseason, re-signing linebacker Lavonte David to a one-year



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deal (his 12th with the Bucs) and locking in cornerback Jamel Dean with a new four-year extension. The secondary lost a pair of starters in safety Mike Edwards (Chiefs) and nickel back Sean Murphy-Bunting (Titans), though, which could test the depth of a unit that has been plagued by injuries in recent years.

Speaking of injuries, All-Pro pass rusher Shaquil Barrett returns after missing half of last season with a torn Achilles. Tampa Bay also re-signed a key depth piece in outside linebacker Anthony Nelson, who could push 2021 first-round Joe Tryon-Shoyinka for the starting job opposite Barrett.

Free agency threatened to deplete much of Tampa Bay's depth in the trenches, but nose tackle Vita Vea returns as the cornerstone. He's a massive mauler who routinely commands double-teams and beats them frequently. His 6.5 sacks led the Bucs last season. Logan Hall, last year's top draft pick at No. 33 overall, is expected to earn a much bigger role after bulking up this offseason. This year's first-round pick, Calijah Kancey, is an undersized but disruptive interior force who gives this unit some explosiveness and big-play ability it desperately needed.

Devin White, David's running mate at inside linebacker, requested a trade earlier this offseason, but the team has made it clear that they expect him to play out the fifth-year option of his rookie contract. He'll have a chance to earn a massive long-term extension either from the Bucs or another team in free agency next offseason, if he proves he can be a more complete player in 2023.

Dean and Carlton Davis III once again will have the starting corner spots locked down on the outside, while Pro Bowl safety Antoine Winfield Jr. returns to help anchor the secondary. The hope is that Winfield can spend more time on the back end of the defense this year after lining up in the slot for much of last season, but with the loss of Murphy-Bunting, it'll require a huge second-year leap from Zyon McCollum or a pleasant surprise in training camp from rookie sixth-rounder Josh Hayes. One new addition who could make a big splash for this unit is safety Ryan Neal, who shockingly wasn't retained after a fantastic 2022 campaign for the Seahawks.

SPECIALISTS

Veteran kicker Ryan Succop was an unsurprising salary-cap casualty after his long-distance consistency continued to waver in 2022, and offseason addition Chase McLaughlin has the inside track to replace him. Punter Jake Camarda lived up to his fourth-round draft slot with a stellar rookie season and should have his spot locked down for the foreseeable future. Zach Triner is back as the long-snapper, and while Deven Thompkins might be the early favorite to retain the return jobs, rookie speedster Trey Palmer could give him a run in training camp.

FINAL ANALYSIS

Many are expecting the Bucs to struggle after Brady's departure, and with the unsettled quarterback situation, as well as questions about Todd Bowles' long-term status as head coach, it's easy to understand the doubt. But there's still plenty of talent on both sides of the ball in Tampa Bay, and the foundational changes on offense easily could provide enough of an improvement to make the Bucs a better team than the one that crawled to a division title despite a losing record last year.

If the offense can stay balanced, either quarterback can distribute the ball and limit turnovers and Bowles' defense can play with more consistency and big-play production, this team has more than enough talent to contend for the NFC South yet again.

If those things don't happen, or injuries pile up again at key positions, the Bucs could see themselves back in the NFL basement and looking at a potential top-10 pick in next year's draft, which could mean potential replacements at both quarterback and head coach.

2022 RESULTS

Sept. 11	at Dallas	W	19-3
Sept. 18	at New Orleans	W	20-10
Sept. 25	Green Bay	L	12-14
Oct. 2	Kansas City	L	31-41
Oct. 9	Atlanta	W	21-15
Oct. 16	at Pittsburgh	L	18-20
Oct. 23	at Carolina	L	3-21
Oct. 27	Baltimore	L	22-27
Nov. 6	LA Rams	W	16-13
Nov. 13	vs. Seattle	W	21-16
Nov. 27	at Cleveland (ot)	L	17-23
Dec. 5	New Orleans	W	17-16
Dec. 11	at San Francisco	L	7-35
Dec. 18	Cincinnati	L	23-34
Dec. 25	at Arizona (ot)	W	19-16
Jan. 1	Carolina	W	30-24
Jan. 8	at Atlanta	L	17-30
Postseason			
Jan. 16	Dallas	L	14-31

2022 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	346.7	15	7
Rushing	76.9	32	16
Passing	269.8	2	1
Scoring	18.4	25	15
Third Down %	37.4	21	12
EPA/Play	-0.030	20	11
TO Differential	-2	T20	T10

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	324.3	T9	5
Rushing	120.7	15	5
Passing	203.6	9	6
Scoring	21.1	15	6
Interceptions	10	T24	11
Sacks	45	T8	T4
EPA/Play	-0.025	11	6

2022 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Tom Brady	733	490	4,694	25	9
Blaine Gabbert	8	6	29	1	0

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Leo. Fournette	189	668	3.5	3
Rachaad White	129	481	3.7	1

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Chris Godwin	104	1,023	9.8	3
Mike Evans	77	1,124	14.6	6
Leo. Fournette	73	523	7.2	3
Russell Gage	51	426	8.4	5
Rachaad White	50	290	5.8	2
Cade Otton	42	391	9.3	2

KICKING: Ryan Succop, 31-38 FGs, 24-25 PAT, 117 points
TACKLES: Lavonte David, 124; Devin White, 124
SACKS: Vita Vea, 6.5; Anthony Nelson, 5.5; Devin White, 5.5
INTERCEPTIONS: Jamel Dean, 2; Mike Edwards, 2; Sean Murphy-Bunting, 2

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

RETURN OF THE CREAMSICLE At long last, Bucs fans will finally see the return of the team's famous "Creamsicle" throwback uniforms this season. After they had come back for a few seasons, a new NFL rule in 2013 prohibited teams from wearing helmet shells of different colors, which meant Tampa Bay's old white helmets were out. That rule is gone now, and the Bucs will be back in their old threads for one of this year's regular-season games.

NUMBERS GAME FOR GODWIN Now that Brady's gone, will **Chris Godwin** take back the No. 12 jersey? "I wish that I could go back, man," Godwin told Athlon's Luke Easterling in an exclusive interview. "But I think I'm stuck with 14. I think that's gonna be me from now on. 12 has meant a lot to me, but I feel like it would be kinda weird going back right now. We'll see. I won't completely close the door, but odds are it's probably 14."

SURE THING Death, taxes, and Mike Evans getting 1,000 receiving yards in a season. Since entering the league as the No. 7 overall pick in the 2014 NFL Draft, that's all Evans has done, topping the 1K mark in each of his nine seasons in the league up to this point. In case you're wondering, that's an NFL record for consecutive 1,000-yard receiving seasons to start a career; Hall of Famer Randy Moss sits in second place with seven.

PEAKS & VALLEYS When things have been bad for the Bucs, they've been pretty bad. They still own the lowest all-time winning percentage of any NFL team — 310-453-1 (.406). But when things have been good for the Bucs, they've been really good. In winning their only two Super Bowl appearances, the Bucs have posted the highest average margin of victory of any Lombardi winner, with a plus-49 point differential in their two dominant wins over the Oakland Raiders and Kansas City Chiefs.

SCOUTING THE BUCCANEERS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP TAMPS BAY "Baker Mayfield succeeding Tom Brady, arguably the greatest quarterback to ever play the game, is super underwhelming. I'm just not a big believer in Baker. Nothing he has done previously screams out that he's going to be successful. … When they're all healthy, this is a solid receiving corps. Mike Evans is a low-key Hall of Fame candidate down the road. He's got size, body control, hands, toughness and enough speed to create separation. … Picking up the fifth-year option for Tristan Wirfs was a no-brainer. He's been very solid. … They really missed Ryan Jensen last year when he hurt his knee. How he battled back is admirable. He's a true tough guy. … The tight end position lacks top-end talent. … Rachaad White is decent for sure, making Leonard Fournette expendable. … I can't see Kyle Trask being a viable option to start if Baker goes down. …The Buccaneers' defense is poised to perform reasonably well after the draft. Although it might not reach the same elite level as the Super Bowl-winning team in 2020, it is expected to remain competitive in a relatively weak NFC South. … Tampa Bay will have to rely on this solid defense as they navigate the post-Brady era. … Vita Vea is a moose inside. … They've got to figure out something with Devin White. He's an unhappy camper with his contract. … Lavonte David keeps playing at a high level, doesn't matter how old he is. … Getting Calijah Kancey wasn't a flashy draft pick, but he can play. … Liking the secondary's size and cover ability, especially Jamel Dean, Carlton Davis III and Antoine Winfield Jr."

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2023 BUCCANEERS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS.	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
6 Mayfield, Baker	QB	6-1	215	5	Oklahoma	FA-LAR-23	D1a-Cle-18
2 Trask, Kyle	QB	6-5	236	2	Florida	D2-21	D2-TB-21
11 Wolford, John	QB	6-1	200	3	Wake Forest	FA-LAR-23	FA-LAR-19

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
22 Edmonds, Chase	RB	5-9	205	5	Fordham	FA-Den-23	D4-Ari-18
43 Laird, Patrick	RB	6-1	205	4	California	FA-22	FA-Mia-19
21 Vaughn, Ke'Shawn	RB	5-10	214	3	Vanderbilt	D3-20	D3-TB-20
1 White, Rachaad	RB	6-0	214	1	Arizona State	D3-22	D3-TB-22

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
13 Evans, Mike	WR	6-5	231	9	Texas A&M	D1-14	D1-TB-14
3 Gage Jr., Russell	WR	6-0	184	5	LSU	FA-Atl-22	D6a-Atl-18
80 Geiger Sr., Kaylon	WR	5-10	180	1	Texas Tech	FA-22	FA-TB-22
14 Godwin, Chris	WR	6-1	209	6	Penn State	D3a-17	D3a-TB-17
41 Kieft, Ko	TE	6-5	265	1	Minnesota	D6-22	D6-TB-22
88 Otton, Cade	TE	6-5	247	1	Washington	D4a-22	D4a-TB-22
83 Thompkins, Deven	WR	5-8	155	1	Utah State	FA-22	FA-TB-22
89 Wells, David	TE	6-6	260	3	San Diego State	FA-22	FA-Dal-18

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
65 Cook, Dylan	T	6-6	305	1	Montana	FA-22	FA-TB-22
71 Feiler, Matt	G	6-6	330	6	Bloomsburg	FA-LAC-23	FA-Hou-14
67 Goedeke, Luke	G/T	6-5	312	1	Central Michigan	D2b-22	D2b-TB-22
70 Hainsey, Robert	OL	6-4	306	2	Notre Dame	D3-21	D3-TB-21
74 Hermanns, Grant	T	6-7	300	1	Purdue	FA-22	FA-NYJ-21
66 Jensen, Ryan	C	6-4	319	9	Colorado St.-Pueblo	FA-Bal-18	D6-Bal-13
60 Leverett, Nick	OL	6-4	310	2	Rice	FA-20	FA-TB-20
75 Molchon, John	G	6-5	309	3	Boise State	FA-20	FA-TB-20
68 Niese, Michael	OL	6-5	295	1	Temple	FA-23	FA-Den-22
77 Skule, Justin	T	6-6	315	4	Vanderbilt	FA-22	D6b-SF-19
64 Stinnie, Aaron	G	6-3	312	5	James Madison	W-Ten-19	FA-Ten-18
73 Walton, Brandon	OL	6-5	300	1	Florida Atlantic	W-Pit-21	FA-Buf-20
78 Wirfs, Tristan	T	6-5	320	3	Iowa	D1-20	D1-TB-20

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
96 Gaines, Greg	DT	6-1	312	4	Washington	FA-LAR-23	D4-LAR-19
91 Greene, Mike	DT	6-3	293	1	James Madison	FA-22	FA-TB-22
90 Hall, Logan	DL	6-6	283	1	Houston	D2a-22	D2a-TB-22
79 O'Connor, Patrick	DL	6-4	270	4	Eastern Michigan	FA-17	D7-Det-17
93 Previlon, Willington	DL	6-5	285	1	Rutgers	FA-21	FA-GB-20
95 Senat, Deadrin	DT	6-1	305	4	USF	FA-22	D3-Atl-18
50 Vea, Vita	NT	6-4	347	5	Washington	D1-18	D1-TB-18

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
7 Barrett, Shaquil	OLB	6-2	250	9	Colorado State	FA-Den-19	FA-Den-14
52 Britt, K.J.	LB	6-0	235	2	Auburn	D5-21	D5-TB-21
54 David, Lavonte	LB	6-1	233	11	Nebraska	D2-12	D2-TB-12
57 Gilbert III, Ulysees	LB	6-0	230	4	Akron	FA-22	D6c-Pit-19
49 Gill, Cam	OLB	6-3	240	3	Wagner	FA-20	FA-TB-20
98 Nelson, Anthony	OLB	6-7	271	4	Iowa	D4-19	D4-TB-19
46 Rashed Jr., Hamilcar	OLB	6-2	251	1	Oregon State	FA-22	FA-NYJ-21
51 Russell, J.J.	LB	6-1	225	1	Memphis	FA-22	FA-TB-22
48 Snowden, Charles	OLB	6-7	245	1	Virginia	FA-22	FA-Chi-21
9 Tryon-Shoyinka, Joe	OLB	6-5	259	2	Washington	D1-21	D1-TB-21
45 White, Devin	LB	6-0	237	4	LSU	D1-19	D1-TB-19

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
37 Chesley, Anthony	CB	6-0	190	2	Coastal Carolina	FA-22	FA-Cin-19
24 Davis III, Carlton	CB	6-1	206	5	Auburn	D2c-18	D2c-TB-18
35 Dean, Jamel	CB	6-1	206	4	Auburn	D3a-19	D3a-TB-19
30 Delaney, Dee	DB	5-11	200	2	Miami	FA-21	FA-Jac-18
36 Gardner, Don	CB	6-1	180	1	South Dakota St.	FA-22	FA-TB-22
28 Lowe, Duron	CB	5-10	190	1	Liberty	FA-23	FA-LAR-22
27 McCollum, Zyon	CB	6-2	199	1	Sam Houston	D5-22	D5-TB-22
23 Neal, Ryan	S	6-3	200	5	Southern Illinois	FA-Sea-23	FA-Phi-18
34 Turner, Nolan	S	6-1	202	1	Clemson	FA-22	FA-TB-22
31 Winfield Jr., Antoine	S	5-9	203	3	Minnesota	D2-20	D2-TB-20

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
5 Camarda, Jake	P	6-1	193	1	Georgia	D4b-22	D4b-TB-22
4 McLaughlin, Chase	K	6-0	190	4	Illinois	FA-Ind-23	FA-Buf-19
97 Triner, Zach	LS	6-3	245	4	Assumption	FA-19	FA-NYJ-17
15 Verity, Jake	K	6-2	197	1	East Carolina	FA-23	FA-Bal-21

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	13	Mike Evans	83	Deven Thompkins
WR	14	Chris Godwin	80	Kaylon Geiger Sr.
WR	3	Russell Gage Jr.	10	Trey Palmer (R)
LT	78	Tristan Wirfs	73	Brandon Walton
LG	60	Nick Leverett	69	Cody Mauch (R)
C	66	Ryan Jensen	70	Robert Hainsey
RG	64	Aaron Stinnie	71	Matt Feiler
RT	67	Luke Goedeke	77	Justin Skule
TE	88	Cade Otton	41	Ko Kieft
QB	6	Baker Mayfield	2	Kyle Trask
RB	1	Rachaad White	22	Chase Edmonds

DEFENSE

DE	94	Calijah Kancey (R)	95	Deadrin Senat
NT	50	Vita Vea	96	Greg Gaines
DT	90	Logan Hall	79	Patrick O'Connor
OLB	7	Shaquil Barrett	98	Anthony Nelson
ILB	54	Lavonte David	8	SirVocea Dennis (R)
ILB	45	Devin White	52	K.J. Britt
OLB	9	Joe Tryon-Shoyinka	0	YaYa Diaby (R)
CB	24	Carlton Davis III	27	Zyon McCollum
CB	35	Jamel Dean	30	Dee Delaney
S	31	Antoine Winfield Jr.	34	Nolan Turner
S	23	Ryan Neal	26	Kaevon Merriweather (R)

SPECIALISTS

K	4	Chase McLaughlin	KR	83	Deven Thompkins
P	5	Jake Camarda	PR	83	Deven Thompkins

5

The Buccaneers' poor ground game had a league-low of five total rushing touchdowns last season. To compare, the Eagles had a league-high 32 total rushing touchdowns.

BUCS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Calijah Kancey	DL	6-1	281	Pittsburgh
2.	Cody Mauch	OL	6-5	302	North Dakota St.
3.	YaYa Diaby	OLB	6-3	263	Louisville
5.	SirVocea Dennis	ILB	6-0	226	Pittsburgh
5.	Payne Durham	TE	6-6	253	Purdue
6.	Josh Hayes	DB	5-11	197	Kansas State
6.	Trey Palmer	WR	6-0	192	Nebraska
6.	Jose Ramirez	OLB	6-2	242	Eastern Michigan

Calijah Kancey is undersized at 6-foot-1 but was the best interior pass rusher in the draft. Cody Mauch is another small-school stud, and his five-position ability should give Tampa Bay valuable depth. YaYa Diaby and Jose Ramirez provide much-needed depth and juice off the edge, while SirVocea Dennis does the same for the second level of the defense. Payne Durham is a massive red-zone threat and a solid blocker, while Trey Palmer brings elite speed the receiver room desperately needed. Josh Hayes played six years of college football and could compete for the starting nickel corner spot. Not getting a starting-caliber tackle to replace Donovan Smith is risky, but otherwise, this class hits all the right notes, making the Bucs a faster, more physical team on both sides of the ball.

CARDINALS

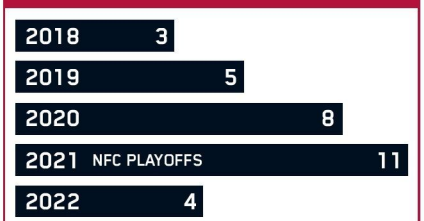
NFC WEST FORECAST **4**

2023 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 10	at Washington	1:00
Sept. 17	N.Y. Giants	4:05
Sept. 24	Dallas	4:25
Oct. 1	at San Francisco	4:25
Oct. 8	Cincinnati	4:05
Oct. 15	at L.A. Rams	4:25
Oct. 22	at Seattle	4:05
Oct. 29	Baltimore	4:25
Nov. 5	at Cleveland	1:00
Nov. 12	Atlanta	4:05
Nov. 19	at Houston	1:00
Nov. 26	L.A. Rams	4:05
Dec. 3	at Pittsburgh	1:00
Dec. 10	BYE	
Dec. 17	San Francisco	4:05
Dec. 24	at Chicago	4:25
Dec. 31	at Philadelphia	1:00
Jan. 7	Seattle	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND



THE COACHES

Head Coach: Jonathan Gannon
Record With Team: 0-0
Career Record: 0-0
Offensive Coordinator: Drew Petzing
Defensive Coordinator: Nick Rallis
Assistant Head Coach/Special Teams Coordinator: Jeff Rodgers
Quarterbacks: Israel Woolfork
Running Backs: Autry Denson
Passing Game Coordinator/Wide Receivers: Drew Terrell
Tight Ends: Ben Steele
Offensive Line: Klayton Adams
Defensive Line: Derrick LeBlanc
Linebackers: Sam Siefkes
Outside Linebackers: Rob Rodriguez
Defensive Backs: Patrick Toney
Cornerbacks: Ryan Smith

Considering everything that has happened with this franchise — the good, the bad and the ugly — there appears to be no clear-cut avenue for the Cardinals to suddenly resurrect themselves and find a way to improve upon last year's dismal 4-13 record.

A revamped front office and a mostly new coaching staff, not to mention a reshaped roster and a starting quarterback in Kyler Murray coming off major knee surgery involving both his ACL and meniscus, don't bode particularly well for a promising 2023 season.

The future is potentially bright — the team netted a talented draft class with some instant contributors, as well as scoring a windfall of key future draft capital a year from now that could change everything. But in the short term, it figures to be a long, long season for the Cardinals.

OFFENSE

All eyes will be on Murray and his ongoing rehab, which he has been attacking hard throughout the entire offseason. Without a clear timeline for his return, however, there remains no real clue how Arizona will fare without him.

As new head coach Jonathan Gannon and offensive coordinator Drew Petzing piece together their new offense, they're almost certain to focus much more on the running game, something that Gannon, the former defensive coordinator for the NFC champion Eagles, knows all about.

It remains to be seen whether veteran running back James Conner, 28, will remain the Cardinals' bell cow or whether another tailback with some panache and a little more zig-zag ability might be added to the mix. The Cardinals' new brass have been clear they want to add more competition at virtually every position, so look for it here as well the closer the team gets to the start of the regular season.

DeAndre Hopkins, who will be playing in his age-31 season, returns to lead the wide receiver room despite having been linked to countless trade rumors since late last season. He still might get dealt at some point, but he's far and away the best pass-catching weapon among a group that also includes Marquise Brown, Rondale Moore, Greg Dortch and free-agent addition Zach Pascal from the Eagles. Tight end Zach Ertz appears to be on track to start the season after rehabbing from his own torn ACL. Look for second-year man Trey McBride to take more steps in his development after an up-and-down rookie season.

Three-fifths of the offense line returns in left tackle D.J. Humphries, right guard Will Hernandez and right tackle Kelvin Beachum. The Cardinals added Humphries' future replacement in first-round pick Paris Johnson Jr. from Ohio State, but he is expected to line up at left guard as a rookie, filling a critical vacancy. Things aren't as clear-cut at center. Arizona doesn't have a player with any long-term experience at the position, and unless a veteran is added, the job could fall to free-agent pickup Hjalte Froholdt, with not much depth behind him.

If the Cardinals struggle badly on this side of the ball, even upon Murray's return, and finish as poorly as the Vegas oddsmakers expect, the franchise may have a big decision to make regarding Murray's future, especially since they hold two first-round picks in next year's draft — theirs and the Texans' following a draft-day trade — and both picks could be in the first five selections.

DEFENSE

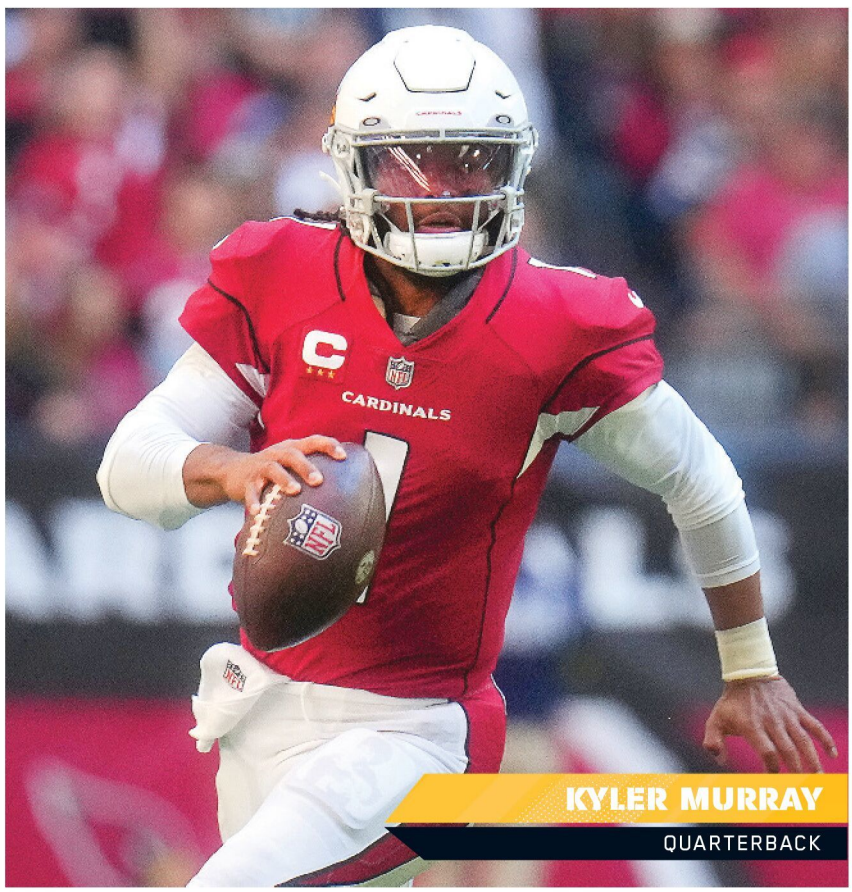
During his introductory news conference back in January, new general manager Monti Ossenfort singled out the best player on the Cardinals' defense, saying,

"Budda Baker represents everything that we want this organization to be, and I'm excited to be on a team with him."

A month later, Baker reportedly asked management for a contract extension with two years remaining on his present deal and allegedly told the team that he wanted to be traded if the Cardinals weren't going to make him the highest-paid safety in the league.

That's a lot to put on a rookie GM's plate, and it has backed Ossenfort into a corner. How he responds to Baker's demands will say a lot about what type of tenure he'll have in Arizona. Ossenfort has said he's had ongoing, positive conversations with Baker, a three-time All-Pro and five-time Pro Bowl selection, but he has kept those talks private.

Baker's situation isn't the only subject worth monitoring regarding the Cardinals defense. Gannon and defensive coordinator Nick Rallis have been tinkering with moving two former first-round picks, Isaiah Simmons and Zaven Collins, out of their linebacker spots. They've been experimenting with using Collins as an outside edge rusher, while Simmons might switch to a hybrid safety role.



JOE RONDONE-USA TODAY SPORTS

Arizona chose not to pick up the fifth-year option on Simmons' rookie deal, which makes him an unrestricted free agent in 2024 unless the two sides can reach agreement on a new deal before then. An agreement feels unlikely right now, but Simmons can help himself and his future if he finds a way to shine in 2023, whatever position he ends up playing.

Along the defensive line, the Cardinals lost J.J. Watt to retirement and Zach Allen to free agency, and they released edge rusher Markus Golden. They don't have a single established pass rusher on the roster and instead appear likely to rely on a strength-in-numbers approach featuring a group that includes second-round pick BJ Ojulari from LSU, journeymen Jonathan Ledbetter and L.J. Collier and second-year pros Myjai Sanders and Cameron Thomas.

Arizona added former Eagles inside linebacker Kyzir White to patrol the middle of the defense, but it remains to be seen who will start on either side of him. It's even sketchier at cornerback, where there are bodies but not exactly top-tier talent. It will be a mix of some experience (Rashad Fenton, Antonio Hamilton Sr.) and a lot of youth (Marco Wilson, Christian Matthew, Garrett Williams, Kei'Trel Clark).

The Cardinals are rock solid at safety with Baker and Jalen Thompson, but they don't have any type of insurance with which to replace Baker should they ultimately decide to trade him.

SPECIALISTS

Veteran kicker Matt Prater returns on a two-year deal, and the NFL record-holder for the most career field goals from 50-plus yards (66) still has one of the league's strongest legs, even though he turns 39 in August. Arizona did not re-sign punter Andy Lee or long snapper Aaron Brewer despite the two having built solid tenures with the Cardinals, and for now it appears Nolan Cooney will handle the punting duties and newcomer Joe Fortunato will be the long snapper. Dortch will be among the top candidates on punt and kick returns, but special teams coordinator Jeff Rodgers, who was retained by new management, is sure to try multiple players at both spots before any final decisions are made.

FINAL ANALYSIS

Gannon might not believe that this team is in the early stages of a rebuild, but judging from what the Cardinals lost, what little they've added and the question marks at quarterback and multiple other positions, it's difficult to believe that this group can win more than four games, if even that. The uncertainty surrounding Hopkins, Baker and Murray also makes it tough to see bright days ahead. Unless they completely stun the entire NFL world, about the only thing people will be talking about when it comes to the Arizona Cardinals is what type of haul they could end up getting in next year's draft.

2022 RESULTS (4-13)

Sept.	11	Kansas City	L	21-44
Sept.	18	at Las Vegas (ot)	W	29-23
Sept.	25	L.A. Rams	L	12-20
Oct.	2	at Carolina	W	26-16
Oct.	9	Philadelphia	L	17-20
Oct.	16	at Seattle	L	9-19
Oct.	20	New Orleans	W	42-34
Oct.	30	at Minnesota	L	26-34
Nov.	6	Seattle	L	21-31
Nov.	13	at L.A. Rams	W	27-17
Nov.	21	vs. San Francisco	L	10-38
Nov.	27	L.A. Chargers	L	24-25
Dec.	12	New England	L	13-27
Dec.	18	at Denver	L	15-24
Dec.	25	Tampa Bay (ot)	L	16-19
Jan.	1	at Atlanta	L	19-20
Jan.	8	at San Francisco	L	13-38

2022 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	323.5	22	12
Rushing	110.2	22	13
Passing	213.3	18	10
Scoring	20.0	21	11
Third Down %	35.2	25	14
EPA/Play	-0.081	28	15
TO Differential	-5	T26	T14

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	348.9	21	9
Rushing	118.6	14	4
Passing	230.3	24	13
Scoring	26.4	31	15
Interceptions	11	T21	10
Sacks	36	T23	12
EPA/Play	0.013	20	9

2022 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Kyler Murray	390	259	2,368	14	7
Colt McCoy	132	90	780	1	3
Trace McSorley	83	45	412	0	5

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
James Conner	183	782	4.3	7
Kyler Murray	67	418	6.2	3
Eno Benjamin	70	299	4.3	2

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Marquise Brown	67	709	10.6	3
DeAndre Hopkins	64	717	11.2	3
Greg Dortch	52	467	9.0	2
Zach Ertz	47	406	8.6	4

KICKING: Matt Prater, 22-25 FGs, 17-18 PAT, 83 points
TACKLES: Budda Baker, 111; Jalen Thompson, 110
SACKS: J.J. Watt, 12.5; Zach Allen 5.5
INTERCEPTIONS: Marco Wilson, 3; Budda Baker, 2; Isaiah Simmons, 2

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

MAGICAL MOMENT Offensive lineman **Paris Johnson Jr.**, the Cardinals' first-round pick out of Ohio State, had a memorable exchange with quarterback Kyler Murray during his official top-30 visit to the franchise. Johnson was walking through the facility when Murray called him by his first name and asked him to come over to chat. He told Johnson he had watched his Pro Day tape, was a big fan and hoped Johnson would end up blocking for him in Arizona. But before that conversation began, Johnson did something first. "I reached for my phone and texted my (Ohio State) teammate, Luke (Wypler), like, 'Dude, Kyler knows my first name,'" Johnson says. "I've never met him in my life. From that moment, I was like, 'Whoa, this is real, I really have a chance.' For an established guy to reach out to a young guy and be like, 'Man, I need you mad on this team, you're an impact guy,' for me, I'm going to play hard regardless. To play for a guy like that who's already established, to reach out to a young guy, how do you not want to see him win? You want to keep him clean."

FAMILY TRADITION Johnson isn't the only member of Arizona's 2023 draft class who had a previous family connection to the Cardinals' franchise. Besides Johnson, whose father was a fifth-round pick by the team back in 1999 as a safety, another rookie can trace his bloodline to the Cardinals. Quarterback Clayton Tune, the fifth-round pick out of Houston, is the great-great nephew of Jim Lawrence, who was the first-ever draft pick for the then-Chicago Cardinals in the league's inaugural draft in 1936. Lawrence was a running back from TCU who was selected with the fifth overall pick.

BACK TO SCHOOL New head coach Jonathan Gannon made a promise soon after his hiring by the Cardinals that meeting rooms for his players would become "a full-time job." That goes for everybody, Gannon added, even Murray, who is still rehabbing from major knee surgery. "Even though he is not on the field, he will be getting stressed out, mentally," Gannon said, adding that all team or position-by-position meetings will be "very interactive."

SCOUTING THE CARDINALS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP ARIZONA "The Cardinals need to figure out the DeAndre Hopkins situation. He still wants to make a ton of money, and his practice habits and recent health aren't good factors in their decision. His trade value is down, too. … At least the Cardinals can count on James Conner. He's a tough dude and a really good running back. … The Cardinals face much uncertainty, starting with quarterback Kyler Murray's massive extension and the controversy surrounding a clause requiring independent film study. Although the contentious clause was removed, Murray was ridiculed. Then, he tore his ACL. How will the team fill the gap? They picked quarterback Clayton Tune in the fifth round; he isn't expected to be ready in Murray's absence. Questions abound. … On a positive note, the Cardinals addressed Murray's concerns by drafting star Ohio State tackle Paris Johnson Jr. with the sixth pick, bolstering their offensive line. … Budda Baker's trade request is another wrinkle for the Cardinals. … The best thing happening with the Cardinals right now is the ton of draft capital Monti Ossenfort acquired in the trade with the Texans. The Cardinals can control the 2024 draft, especially if the Texans are bad again, as they have been for the past three seasons. … I liked the Jonathan Gannon hire. He did a really good job in Philly and has a scouting background. He'll need it because they've got a terrible roster, and it may get worse if they lose Budda or Hopkins."

MARK HENLE/USA TODAY SPORTS

2023 CARDINALS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS.	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
17 Blough, David	QB	6-1	205	4	Purdue	FA-22	FA-Cle-19
14 Driskel, Jeff	QB	6-4	235	7	Louisiana Tech	FA-Hou-23	D6-SF-16
12 McCoy, Colt	QB	6-1	212	13	Texas	FA-NYG-21	D3-Cle-10
1 Murray, Kyler	QB	5-10	207	4	Oklahoma	D1-19	D1-Ari-19

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
23 Clement, Corey	RB	5-10	227	6	Wisconsin	FA-22	FA-Phi-17
6 Conner, James	RB	6-1	233	6	Pittsburgh	FA-Pit-21	D3b-Pit-17
30 Ingram, Keaontay	RB	6-0	221	1	USC	D6-22	D6-Ari-22
22 Williams, Ty'Son	RB	6-0	220	3	BYU	FA-22	FA-Bal-20

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
82 Baccellia, Andre	WR	5-10	175	1	Washington	FA-21	FA-KC-20
2 Brown, Marquise	WR	5-9	180	4	Oklahoma	T-Bal-22	D1-Bal-19
83 Dortch, Greg	WR	5-7	175	3	Wake Forest	FA-21	FA-NYJ-19
86 Ertz, Zach	TE	6-5	250	10	Stanford	T-Phi-21	D2-Phi-13
10 Hopkins, DeAndre	WR	6-1	212	10	Clemson	T-Hou-20	D1-Hou-13
85 McBride, Trey	TE	6-4	246	1	Colorado State	D2-22	D2-Ari-22
4 Moore, Rondale	WR	5-7	181	2	Purdue	D2-21	D2-Ari-21
0 Pascal, Zach	WR	6-2	215	5	Old Dominion	FA-Phi-23	FA-Was-17
49 Pierce Jr., Chris	TE	6-3	230	1	Vanderbilt	FA-22	FA-Ari-22
80 Seikovits, Bernhard	TE	6-5	262	1	None	FA-21	FA-Ari-21
89 Tate, Auden	WR	6-5	228	4	Florida State	FA-23	D7c-Cin-18
81 Togiai, Noah	TE	6-4	244	2	Oregon State	FA-23	FA-Phi-20
84 Wims, Javon	WR	6-4	222	5	Georgia	FA-22	D7-Chi-18

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
66 Barton, Jackson	OL	6-7	302	4	Utah	FA-LV-23	D7-Ind-19
68 Beachum, Kelvin	OL	6-3	308	11	SMU	FA-20	D7-Pit-12
71 Daley, Dennis	OL	6-6	326	4	South Carolina	FA-Ten-23	D6-Car-19
50 Davenport, Julien	OL	6-7	315	5	Bucknell	FA-22	D4-Hou-17
72 Froholdt, Hjalte	OL	6-5	310	4	Arkansas	FA-Cle-23	D4-NE-19
78 Hayes, Marquis	OL	6-5	318	1	Oklahoma	D7-22	D7-Ari-22
76 Hernandez, Will	OL	6-3	332	5	UTEP	FA-NYG-22	D2-NYG-18
75 Howerton, Hayden	OL	6-3	300	1	SMU	W-NE-23	FA-Ten-22
74 Humphries, D.J.	OL	6-5	307	7	Florida	D1-15	D1-Ari-15
79 Jones, Josh	OL	6-7	310	3	Houston	D3-20	D3-Ari-20
60 Martin, Koda	OL	6-6	304	1	Syracuse	FA-20	FA-LAC-19
73 Simmons, Lachavious	OL	6-5	319	3	Tennessee State	FA-22	D7-Chi-20
54 Smith, Lecitus	OL	6-3	314	1	Virginia Tech	D6-22	D6-Ari-22
70 Traore, Badara	OL	6-7	327	3	LSU	FA-20	FA-Ari-20
65 Wilkinson, Elijah	OL	6-6	314	5	UMass	FA-Atl-23	FA-Den-17

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
69 Banks, Eric	DL	6-5	289	3	UTSA	FA-22	FA-LAR-20
91 Collier, L.J.	DL	6-3	291	4	TCU	FA-Sea-23	D1-Sea-19
25 Collins, Zaven	DL	6-4	260	2	Tulsa	D1-21	D1-Ari-21
95 Fotu, Leki	DL	6-5	335	3	Utah	D4a-20	D4a-Ari-20
96 Jones, Manny	DL	6-4	290	1	Colorado State	FA-22	FA-Ari-22
90 Lawrence, Rashard	DL	6-2	308	3	LSU	D4b-20	D4b-Ari-20
93 Ledbetter, Jonathan	DL	6-4	282	1	Georgia	FA-21	FA-Mia-19
41 Sanders, Myjai	DL	6-5	248	1	Cincinnati	D3-22	D3-Ari-22
92 Strong, Kevin	DL	6-4	295	4	UTSA	FA-Ten-23	FA-Det-19
94 Watkins, Carlos	DL	6-3	305	6	Clemson	FA-Dal-23	D4b-Hou-17

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
56 Barnes, Krys	LB	6-2	229	3	UCLA	FA-GB-23	FA-GB-20
52 Dimukeje, Victor	LB	6-2	262	2	Duke	D6a-21	D6a-Ari-21
45 Gardeck, Dennis	LB	6-0	232	5	Sioux Falls	FA-18	FA-Ari-18
43 Luketa, Jesse	LB	6-3	253	1	Penn State	D7-22	D7-Ari-22
55 Lynch, Blake	LB	6-3	233	3	Baylor	FA-22	FA-Min-20
9 Simmons, Isaiah	LB	6-4	238	3	Clemson	D1-20	D1-Ari-20
97 Thomas, Cameron	LB	6-4	267	1	San Diego State	D3-22	D3-Ari-22
47 Turner, Ezekiel	LB	6-2	214	5	Washington	FA-18	FA-Ari-18
7 White, Kyzir	LB	6-2	234	5	West Virginia	FA-Phi-23	D4-LAC-18
51 Woods, Josh	LB	6-1	230	5	Maryland	FA-Det-23	FA-Chi-18

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
3 Baker, Budda	S	5-10	195	6	Washington	D2-17	D2-Ari-17
29 Boyd, Kris	CB	5-11	195	4	Texas	FA-Min-23	D7a-Min-19
Chachere, Andre	S	6-0	197	2	San José State	W-Ind-21	FA-Hou-18
24 Fenton, Rashad	CB	5-11	193	4	South Carolina	FA-Atl-23	D6-KC-19
27 Hairston, Nate	CB	6-0	185	5	Temple	FA-22	D5-Ind-17
33 Hamilton Sr., Antonio	CB	6-0	195	7	South Carolina St.	FA-21	FA-LV-16
36 Hughes, JuJu	S	5-11	191	3	Fresno State	FA-22	FA-LAR-20
35 Matthew, Christian	CB	6-2	195	1	Valdosta State	D7-22	D7-Ari-22
38 Moffatt, Jovante	S	5-11	213	3	Middle Tennessee	W-Atl-23	FA-Cle-20
32 Thomas, Josh	S	6-0	205	2	Appalachian State	FA-22	FA-Buf-20
34 Thompson, Jalen	S	5-11	190	4	Washington State	SD5-19	SD5-Ari-19
39 Whittaker, Jace	CB	5-11	185	2	Arizona	FA-20	FA-Ari-20
20 Wilson, Marco	CB	6-0	191	2	Florida	D4-21	D4-Ari-21

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
16 Cooney, Nolan	P	6-3	202	1	Syracuse	FA-23	FA-NO-21
48 Fortunato, Joe	LS	6-5	240	1	Delaware	FA-23	FA-Dal-20
19 Fry, Elliott	K	6-0	170	1	South Carolina	FA-23	FA-Chi-19
5 Prater, Matt	K	5-10	201	16	UCF	FA-Det-21	FA-Det-06

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	10	DeAndre Hopkins	13	Michael Wilson (R)
WR	2	Marquise Brown	83	Greg Dortch
WR	4	Rondale Moore	0	Zach Pascal
LT	74	D.J. Humphries	71	Dennis Daley
LG	70	Paris Johnson Jr. (R)	65	Elijah Wilkinson
C	72	Hjalte Froholdt	54	Lecitus Smith
RG	76	Will Hernandez	59	Jon Gaines II (R)
RT	68	Kelvin Beachum	79	Josh Jones
TE	86	Zach Ertz	85	Trey McBride
QB	1	Kyler Murray	12	Colt McCoy
RB	6	James Conner	30	Keaontay Ingram

DEFENSE

DE	25	Zaven Collins	41	Myjai Sanders
DT	90	Rashard Lawrence	96	Manny Jones
DT	95	Leki Fotu	92	Kevin Strong
DE	93	Jonathan Ledbetter	91	L.J. Collier
SLB	18	BJ Ojulari (R)	45	Dennis Gardeck
MLB	7	Kyzir White	56	Krys Barnes
WLB	9	Isaiah Simmons	44	Owen Pappoe (R)
CB	24	Rashad Fenton	35	Christian Matthew
CB	20	Marco Wilson	33	Antonio Hamilton Sr.
SS	34	Jalen Thompson	36	JuJu Hughes
FS	3	Budda Baker	32	Josh Thomas

SPECIALISTS

K	5	Matt Prater	KR	83	Greg Dortch
P	16	Nolan Cooney	PR	83	Greg Dortch

4.4

The Cardinals' struggled with generating explosive plays, which is why they averaged a league-worst 4.4 yards before catch per reception.

CARDINALS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: A-

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Paris Johnson Jr.	OT/G	6-6	310	Ohio State
2.	BJ Ojulari	DE/OLB	6-3	250	LSU
3.	Garrett Williams	CB	6-0	189	Syracuse
3.	Michael Wilson	WR	6-2	209	Stanford
4	Jon Gaines II	OG	6-4	300	UCLA
5.	Clayton Tune	QB	6-2	216	Houston
5.	Owen Pappoe	ILB	6-1	225	Auburn
6.	Kei'Trel Clark	CB	5-10	179	Louisville
6.	Dante Stills	DT	6-4	280	West Virginia

Not only did the Cardinals draft a handful of players who will compete for starting spots right away, but they also set themselves up for 2024 by making deals to acquire more picks. In addition to owning two first-round picks, they will have six selections that likely will be among the first 70 picks overall; that's a boatload of valuable capital. Paris Johnson Jr. eventually will become their franchise left tackle, but for now, he can fill the vacant spot at left guard. BJ Ojulari gives them the tenacious pass rusher they desperately needed. Garrett Williams and Michael Wilson were coming off injuries but should be full-go by training camp. Jon Gaines II and Owen Pappoe will push for playing time. Kei'Trel Clark and Dante Stills have a real chance to open up some eyes. And if they need him to be, Clayton Tune might just end up as Arizona's answer to Brock Purdy.

L.A. RAMS

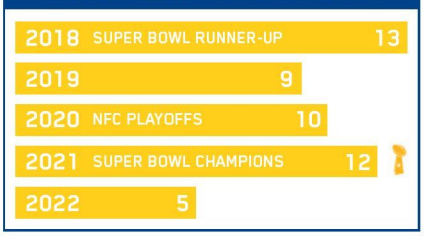
NFC WEST FORECAST **3**

2023 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 10	at Seattle	4:25
Sept. 17	San Francisco	4:05
Sept. 25	at Cincinnati	8:15
Oct. 1	at Indianapolis	1:00
Oct. 8	Philadelphia	4:05
Oct. 15	Arizona	4:25
Oct. 22	Pittsburgh	4:05
Oct. 29	at Dallas	1:00
Nov. 5	at Green Bay	1:00
Nov. 12	BYE	
Nov. 19	Seattle	4:25
Nov. 26	at Arizona	4:05
Dec. 3	Cleveland	4:25
Dec. 10	at Baltimore	1:00
Dec. 17	Washington	4:05
Dec. 21	New Orleans	8:15
Dec. 31	at New York Giants	1:00
Jan. 7	at San Francisco	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND



THE COACHES

Head Coach: Sean McVay
Record With Team: 60-38
Career Record: 60-38
Offensive Coordinator: Mike LaFleur
Defensive Coordinator: Raheem Morris
Special Teams Coordinator: Chase Blackburn
Quarterbacks/Pass Game Coordinator: Zac Robinson
Running Backs: Ron Gould
Wide Receivers: Eric Yarber
Tight Ends: Nick Caley
Offensive Line: Ryan Wendell
Run Game Coordinator/Defensive Line: Eric Henderson
Linebackers/Pass Rush Coordinator: Chris Shula
Outside Linebackers: Joe Coniglio
Secondary: Chris Beake
Defensive Backs/Pass Game Coordinator: Aubrey Pleasant

Rams general manager Les Snead declined to call 2023 a rebuilding year, despite dumping several key players via trade or release — including Jalen Ramsey, Leonard Floyd and Allen Robinson II — and accumulating $74.2 million in dead money on the team's salary cap. Paying starters to leave strongly indicates that the once-mighty Rams are rebuilding the roster, but Snead can get away with calling 2023 a "remodel" because quarterback Matthew Stafford, wide receiver Cooper Kupp and defensive lineman Aaron Donald are still on the roster, and head coach Sean McVay remains on the sidelines. Not many rebuilding teams have that type of core group with one of the best head coaches in the NFL.

A year after enduring a dreadful 5-12 season, the Rams have the pieces to make a quick turnaround two years after winning the Super Bowl. But they have many inexperienced players on defense, and the offensive line might give Stafford trouble again. The Rams are no longer Super Bowl contenders, but perhaps they can make some noise as they usher in a new phase under Snead and McVay.

OFFENSE

Stafford, who had many rebuilding seasons during his time with the Detroit Lions, hasn't shown signs of frustration with the Rams after they tore down the roster to repair the salary cap. It probably helps that Stafford captured his coveted Super Bowl ring during his first season in L.A., but the 15th-year veteran appears rejuvenated. Stafford, who was limited to nine games in 2022 due to various injuries, was eager to participate in the team's offseason program; he missed it entirely last season because of elbow surgery on his throwing arm.

Stafford doesn't need repetitions with Kupp because they have exceptional chemistry, but now he's gotten more time to work with wide receivers Van Jefferson and Tutu Atwell, two players who will be needed to step up after the team traded Robinson to the Steelers. Jefferson, who missed six games last season because of injury, likely will fill the No. 2 role behind Kupp, and Atwell will have to compete for snaps with wideouts Ben Skowronek, Lance McCutcheon and rookie Puka Nacua. The Rams' receivers have versatility and upside, but many of them need to prove they can become consistent playmakers and not force Stafford to overfeed Kupp.

The same can be said about the tight ends, with Tyler Higbee being the only reliable target. This will be a make-or-break season for tight end Brycen Hopkins, who will have to compete for snaps with Hunter Long, who arrived in the Ramsey trade with the Dolphins.

But improvements from the pass-catchers might not matter if the offensive line struggles again. The Rams allowed 59 sacks last season, third most in the NFL. Right tackle Rob Havenstein was the only offensive lineman who played every game last season and the lone reliable blocker for Stafford. Logan Bruss likely will take over at right guard after missing his entire rookie season because of a torn ACL. Joe Noteboom will get another shot to prove he's a quality left tackle after struggling in his first season as the full-time starter, which was cut short by a torn Achilles tendon in October. If Noteboom isn't fully recovered by the start of the season, Alaric Jackson is in line to be the starting left tackle. Noteboom might benefit from having savvy veteran Coleman Shelton move to left guard, but Shelton and Bruss might have to compete with rookie Steve Avila, the team's second-round pick. Center Brian Allen is a productive player

JOE CAMPOREALE/USA TODAY

and has chemistry with Stafford, but he has a lengthy history with injuries. Avila might eventually take over for Allen as the team's starting center, and it's not set in stone that Allen will continue as the starter this season because Shelton also has experience at center. Depth and versatility is a good problem to have with the starting offensive line being decimated by injuries last year.

Running back Cam Akers ended 2022 on a strong note; 345 of his team-leading 786 rushing yards came in the final three weeks. The rushing scheme, however, might look different with new offensive coordinator Mike LaFleur. Also, if Kyren Williams doesn't endure more injuries, he might compete with Akers for the lead role.

DEFENSE

With Ramsey, Floyd and Bobby Wagner no longer on the roster, the Rams will have plenty of inexperienced defensive starters around Donald, the three-time Defensive Player of the Year. Donald, who turned 32 in May and contemplated retirement again this offseason, will be one of two returning defensive starters, joining safety Jordan Fuller, who played only three games last season because of injuries. Inside linebacker Ernest Jones also has starting experience and learned behind Wagner last year, but the Rams' defensive depth chart has plenty of unknowns outside of Donald, Fuller and Jones.

Cobie Durant and Derion Kendrick will be in the mix to start at cornerback, and Russ Yeast and Quentin Lake likely will contribute to the safety rotation. Those four players were drafted last year and could now form the bulk of the starting secondary.

It's tougher to tell what the defensive line might look like around Donald. Marquise Copeland has flashed at times and might be in line to start on the Rams' interior defensive line. Defensive tackle Kobie Turner, the team's third-round pick, could compete for snaps as a rotational 3-technique. Michael Hoecht was a surprise gem last season after the team moved him from interior defensive line to edge rusher. Hoecht will get an opportunity to start again, and it might not be tough for him to win the job with plenty of inexperience at the position. With a lack of depth, rookie Byron Young, the team's second third-round pick, could start opposite Hoecht. Raheem Morris remains as defensive coordinator, but this will be his biggest challenge since he joined the Rams' staff in 2021.

SPECIALISTS

The Rams entered the draft without a kicker, punter and long snapper on the roster. They'll have plenty of youth at those three positions after drafting punter Ethan Evans in the seventh round and signing undrafted long snapper Alex Ward. The Rams likely will have a training camp battle at kicker after signing undrafted free agents Tanner Brown and Christopher Dunn. Atwell will likely handle the punt return duties, and Williams might get an opportunity at kick returner. Kupp is also capable of helping as a punt returner.

FINAL ANALYSIS

The Rams have a top-heavy roster with Stafford, Kupp and Donald at the forefront, and with so much inexperience across the roster, it could be another long year for McVay. The Rams don't appear to be a playoff contender, but they added depth to the offensive line, and that could be enough to keep this squad competitive after Thanksgiving.

But the offense isn't this team's biggest problem. The unknown defensive players behind Donald likely will dictate whether the Rams are competing for the No. 1 overall pick in 2024 or fighting for a wild-card spot in Week 18 of the 2023 season. But with McVay still on the sidelines, don't be surprised if the Rams have a better-than-expected season as a new era begins in Los Angeles.

2022 RESULTS (5-12)

Sept.	8	Buffalo	L	10-31
Sept.	18	Atlanta	W	31-27
Sept.	25	at Arizona	W	20-12
Oct.	3	at San Francisco	L	9-24
Oct.	9	Dallas	L	10-22
Oct.	16	Carolina	W	24-10
Oct.	30	San Francisco	L	14-31
Nov.	6	at Tampa Bay	L	13-16
Nov.	13	Arizona	L	17-27
Nov.	20	at New Orleans	L	20-27
Nov.	27	at Kansas City	L	10-26
Dec.	4	Seattle	L	23-27
Dec.	8	Las Vegas	W	17-16
Dec.	19	at Green Bay	L	12-24
Dec.	25	Denver	W	51-14
Jan.	1	at L.A. Chargers	L	10-31
Jan.	8	at Seattle (ot)	L	16-19

2022 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	280.5	32	16
Rushing	97.7	T27	T14
Passing	182.8	27	13
Scoring	18.1	27	16
Third Down %	39.3	18	10
EPA/Play	-0.083	29	16
TO Differential	-1	T16	9

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	341.1	19	8
Rushing	115.1	13	3
Passing	226.0	21	11
Scoring	22.6	T21	10
Interceptions	16	T7	T4
Sacks	38	T21	T10
EPA/Play	0.015	21	10

2022 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Matthew Stafford	303	206	2,087	10	8
Baker Mayfield	129	82	850	4	2
John Wolford	62	38	390	1	3

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Cam Akers	188	786	4.2	7
Darr. Henderson Jr.	70	283	4.0	3
Kyren Williams	35	139	4.0	0

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Cooper Kupp	75	812	10.8	6
Tyler Higbee	72	620	8.6	3
Ben Skowronek	39	376	9.6	0
Allen Robinson II	33	339	10.3	3

KICKING: Matt Gay, 28-30 FGs, 31-32 PAT, 115 points
TACKLES: Bobby Wagner, 140; Ernest Jones, 114
SACKS: Leonard Floyd, 9.0; Bobby Wagner, 6.0
INTERCEPTIONS: Jalen Ramsey, 4; Cobie Durant, 3

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

MAKING ADJUSTMENTS For many years, **Matthew Stafford** had one of the strongest arms in the NFL, but his range on deep throws noticeably declined last season. Stafford hasn't shied away from that and said he's no longer a human JUGS machine. But the 15th-year veteran still has plenty of zip on his throws, and he might benefit from having an offseason program, which he didn't have a year ago because of the elbow surgery he had on his throwing arm not long after winning the Super Bowl. Now Stafford is one of the few veteran quarterbacks who enjoys the offseason program.

REVAMPED COACHING STAFF Offensive coordinator Mike LaFleur is one of nine new faces on Sean McVay's coaching staff for 2023. The Rams also added special teams coordinator Chase Blackburn, who coached special teams with the Titans and Panthers and won two Super Bowls with the Giants as a special-teams player. Aubrey Pleasant returns for his second stint with the Rams and will coach the defensive backs. McVay shook up the staff as the Rams entered a new phase for the organization.

DAWG QB ROOM McVay joked after the draft that he wanted all his quarterbacks to be former Georgia Bulldogs. He might get that at the top of his QB depth chart with rookie Stetson Bennett IV possibly being Stafford's backup this season. Bennett won back-to-back national titles at Georgia, and fellow Georgia alum Stafford was in attendance for the second championship — at SoFi Stadium. Bennett lacks ideal size (5-foot-11) for the position, but he proved in college he could excel under the spotlight.

HALL OF FAME UNCLE Rookie cornerback Tre'Vius Hodges-Tomlinson, the Rams' sixth-round selection, is the nephew of Hall of Fame running back LaDainian Tomlinson, who also played at TCU before being selected fifth overall by the Chargers in 2001. Hodges-Tomlinson has high family expectations, and he might compete for a starting spot with the Rams lacking depth at cornerback. Hodges-Tomlinson also got a shoutout tweet from star cornerback Jalen Ramsey after the Rams drafted him.

SCOUTING THE RAMS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP LOS ANGELES "Whether Sean McVay is truly all-in definitely impacted the Rams' ability to do business this offseason. Some coaches left because of the uncertainty. There was even a staff meeting where he told coaches to look around and get jobs because his commitment was wavering. He seems to be all-in right now, though. … A healthy Matthew Stafford fixes a lot of the Rams' issues. … One of their better draft picks was center-guard Steve Avila. He's a road-grader. He's extremely strong and has good technique. … Cam Akers went from the doghouse to a vital part of the offense. That was a turnaround most people didn't see coming. … Aaron Donald is still Aaron Donald. No one, and I mean no one, can block that guy. … I thought drafting Byron Young helps them right away. He's a plug-and-play type. … They're fully leaning into the rebuild now. Trading Jalen Ramsey proved that. … Why would the Rams draft Georgia quarterback Stetson Bennett IV in the fourth round? His type of mindset and potential character concerns haven't historically translated well to the NFL. A huge gamble, particularly if Stafford is sidelined. Bennett was outstanding in college, so at least he has that working in his favor. … The special teams situation is puzzling for Los Angeles, with no kickers, punters or long snappers rostered before the draft. It's curious for the Rams to rely solely on rookies in a unit often underrated by fans."

NATHAN RAY SEEBECK/USA TODAY SPORTS

2023 RAMS VETERAN ROSTER

	QUARTERBACKS	POS.	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
14	Cookus, Case	QB	6-4	205	3	Northern Arizona	FA-23	FA-NYG-20
9	Stafford, Matthew	QB	6-3	220	14	Georgia	T-Det-21	D1a-Det-09
11	Rypien, Brett	QB	6-2	202	4	Boise State	FA-Den-23	FA-Den-19

	RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
3	Akers, Cam	RB	5-10	217	2	Florida State	D2a-20	D2a-LAR-20
30	Rivers, Ronnie	RB	5-9	195	1	Fresno State	FA-22	FA-Ari-22
23	Williams, Kyren	RB	5-9	194	1	Notre Dame	D5-22	D5-LAR-22

	RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
5	Atwell, Tutu	WR	5-9	165	2	Louisville	D2-21	D2-LAR-21
37	Harris, Jacob	WR	6-5	211	2	UCF	D4c-21	D4c-LAR-21
89	Higbee, Tyler	TE	6-6	255	7	WKU	D4a-16	D4a-LAR-16
88	Hopkins, Brycen	TE	6-4	245	3	Purdue	D4-20	D4-LAR-20
12	Jefferson, Van	WR	6-1	200	3	Florida	D2b-20	D2b-LAR-20
10	Kupp, Cooper	WR	6-2	208	6	Eastern Washington	D3a-17	D3a-LAR-17
84	Long, Hunter	TE	6-5	254	2	Boston College	T-Mia-23	D3-Mia-21
82	McCutcheon, Lance	WR	6-3	202	1	Montana State	FA-22	FA-LAR-22
18	Skowronek, Ben	WR	6-3	224	2	Notre Dame	D7b-21	D7b-LAR-21
81	Trammell, Austin	WR	5-10	185	1	Rice	FA-22	FA-Atl-21

	OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
55	Allen, Brian	C	6-2	303	5	Michigan State	D4a-18	D4a-LAR-18
72	Anchrum Jr., Tremayne	G	6-2	314	2	Clemson	D7c-20	D7c-LAR-20
61	Arcuri, AJ	T	6-7	320	1	Michigan State	D7c-22	D7c-LAR-22
60	Bruss, Logan	G	6-5	309	1	Wisconsin	D3-22	D3-LAR-22
67	Brewer, Chandler	T	6-6	320	2	Middle Tennessee	FA-19	FA-LAR-19
79	Havenstein, Rob	T	6-8	330	8	Wisconsin	D2-15	D2-LAR-15
77	Jackson, Alaric	T	6-7	285	2	Iowa	FA-21	FA-LAR-21
70	Noteboom, Joe	T	6-5	321	5	TCU	D3-18	D3-LAR-18
66	Pircher, Max	T	6-7	300	1	Innsbruck	FA-23	FA-LAR-21
65	Shelton, Coleman	G	6-4	299	4	Washington	FA-19	FA-LAR-19
57	Thomas, Zachary	T	6-5	300	1	San Diego State	FA-22	D6-Chi-22

	DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
95	Brown III, Bobby	DT	6-4	324	2	Texas A&M	D4a-21	D4a-LAR-21
90	Brown IV, Earnest	DE	6-5	270	1	Northwestern	D5-21	D5-LAR-21
98	Carter, T.J.	DE	6-4	289	1	Kentucky	FA-22	FA-Ari-20
93	Copeland, Marquise	DT	6-2	287	2	Cincinnati	FA-19	FA-LAR-19
99	Donald, Aaron	DT	6-1	280	9	Pittsburgh	D1b-14	D1b-LAR-14
52	Murchison, Larrell	DT	6-2	297	3	NC State	W-Ten-22	D5-Ten-20
92	Williams, Jonah	DT	6-5	275	2	Weber State	FA-21	FA-LAR-20

	LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
44	Hardy, Daniel	LB	6-3	240	1	Montana State	D7a-22	D7a-LAR-22
97	Hoecht, Michael	LB	6-4	310	2	Brown	FA-20	FA-LAR-20
35	Hummel, Jacob	LB	6-1	236	1	Iowa State	FA-22	FA-LAR-22
53	Jones, Ernest	LB	6-2	230	2	South Carolina	D3-21	D3-LAR-21
56	Rozeboom, Christian	LB	6-2	230	2	South Dakota St.	FA-21	FA-LAR-20
96	Thomas, Keir	LB	6-2	275	1	Florida State	FA-22	FA-LAR-22
51	VanValkenburg, Zach	LB	6-4	263	1	Iowa	FA-22	FA-LV-22

	DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
14	Durant, Cobie	CB	5-11	180	1	South Carolina St.	D4-22	D4-LAR-22
4	Fuller, Jordan	DB	6-2	203	3	Ohio State	D6-20	D6-LAR-20
22	Jolly, Shaun	CB	5-9	180	1	Appalachian State	FA-22	FA-Cle-22
1	Kendrick, Derion	CB	6-0	190	1	Georgia	D6b-22	D6b-LAR-22
37	Lake, Quentin	S	6-1	201	1	UCLA	D6a-22	D6a-LAR-22
26	LeCounte III, Richard	S	5-11	196	1	Georgia	FA-22	D5-Cle-21
8	Rochell, Robert	DB	6-2	195	2	Central Arkansas	D4b-21	D4b-LAR-21
2	Yeast, Russ	DB	5-10	195	1	Kansas State	D7b-22	D7b-LAR-22

	SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
	Brown, Tanner	K	6-0	180	R	Oklahoma State	FA-23	FA-LAR-23
15	Dunn, Christopher	K	5-8	170	R	NC State	FA-23	FA-LAR-23

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	10	Cooper Kupp	5	Tutu Atwell
WR	12	Van Jefferson	17	Puka Nacua (R)
WR	18	Ben Skowronek	82	Lance McCutcheon
LT	70	Joe Noteboom	77	Alaric Jackson
LG	65	Coleman Shelton	73	Steve Avila (R)
C	55	Brian Allen	65	Coleman Shelton
RG	60	Logan Bruss	72	Tremayne Anchrum Jr.
RT	79	Rob Havenstein	61	AJ Arcuri
TE	89	Tyler Higbee	84	Hunter Long
QB	9	Matthew Stafford	13	Stetson Bennett IV (R)
RB	3	Cam Akers	23	Kyren Williams

DEFENSE

DL	99	Aaron Donald	52	Larrell Murchison
NT	95	Bobby Brown III	91	Kobie Turner (R)
DT	93	Marquise Copeland	92	Jonah Williams
OLB	97	Michael Hoecht	44	Daniel Hardy
ILB	53	Ernest Jones	31	Nick Hampton (R)
ILB	56	Christian Rozeboom	35	Jake Hummel
OLB	0	Byron Young (R)	96	Keir Thomas
CB	14	Cobie Durant	8	Robert Rochell
CB	1	Derion Kendrick	6	Tre'Vius Hodges-Tomlinson (R)
SS	4	Jordan Fuller	26	Richard LeCounte III
FS	37	Quentin Lake	2	Russ Yeast

SPECIALISTS

K	15	Christopher Dunn (R)	KR	23	Kyren Williams
P	41	Ethan Evans (R)	PR	15	Tutu Atwell

81.8

The Rams' offensive line is coming off a dreadful season in which it received a pass blocking efficiency grade of 81.8 from Pro Football Focus, which ranked 30th in the league.

RAMS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
2.	Steve Avila	G/C	6-3	330	TCU
3.	Byron Young	OLB	6-2	248	Tennessee
3.	Kobie Turner	DT	6-2	288	Syracuse
4.	Stetson Bennett IV	QB	5-11	190	Georgia
5.	Nick Hampton	DE	6-2	235	Appalachian St.
5.	Warren McClendon Jr.	OT	6-4	290	Georgia
5.	Davis Allen	TE	6-6	250	Clemson
5.	Puka Nacua	WR	6-1	208	BYU
6.	Tre'Vius Hodges-Tomlinson	CB	5-8	175	TCU
6.	Ochaun Mathis	DE	6-4	247	Nebraska
6.	Zach Evans	RB	6-0	215	Ole Miss
7.	Ethan Evans	P	6-4	235	Wingate
7.	Jason Taylor II	S	6-0	208	Oklahoma State
7.	Desjuan Johnson	DE	6-2	285	Toledo

The Rams used their first pick (36th overall) on the versatile Steve Avila, who likely will contend for a guard spot this year. Byron Young needs to improve with setting the edge versus the run, but he was a productive pass rusher in college. Kobie Turner could also start as a rookie because of how thin the interior defensive line is behind Aaron Donald, but Turner has the versatility to provide immediate help for his All-Pro teammate.

SF 49ERS

NFC WEST FORECAST

2

2023 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 10	at Pittsburgh	1:00
Sept. 17	at L.A. Rams	4:05
Sept. 21	N.Y. Giants	7:15
Oct. 1	Arizona	4:25
Oct. 8	Dallas	8:20
Oct. 15	at Cleveland	1:00
Oct. 23	at Minnesota	8:15
Oct. 29	Cincinnati	4:25
Nov. 5	BYE	
Nov. 12	at Jacksonville	1:00
Nov. 19	Tampa Bay	4:05
Nov. 23	at Seattle	8:20
Dec. 3	at Philadelphia	4:25
Dec. 10	Seattle	4:05
Dec. 17	at Arizona	4:05
Dec. 25	Baltimore	7:15
Dec. 31	at Washington	1:00
Jan. 7	L.A. Rams	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

THE COACHES

Head Coach: Kyle Shanahan
Record With Team: 52-46
Career Record: 52-46
Defensive Coordinator: Steve Wilks
Special Teams Coordinator: Brian Schneider
Quarterbacks: Brian Griese
Assistant Head Coach/Running Backs: Anthony Lynn
Wide Receivers: Leonard Hankerson
Tight Ends: Brian Fleury
Offensive Line/Run Game Coordinator: Chris Foerster
Running Backs: Robert Turner Jr.
Passing Game Specialist: Klint Kubiak
Defensive Line: Kris Kocurek
Linebackers: Johnny Holland
Defensive Backs: Daniel Bullocks

The 49ers, who are 28 years removed from their last Super Bowl title, will try to finish this season as the last team standing with a starting quarterback who was the last pick in his draft.

Brock Purdy's unexpected emergence after he was the 262nd selection in 2022 was among the biggest stories of the NFL season. And Purdy's attempt to reprise his rookie performance on a team that remains a Super Bowl contender will keep his name in the headlines.

The 49ers went 13-4 last year and won 12 straight before Purdy suffered an elbow injury that required offseason surgery in the first quarter of their loss to the Eagles in the NFC title game. And they are poised to run it back. They will return 19 of 22 starters and have added Pro Bowl defensive tackle Javon Hargrave, who was among the top free agents on the market.

OFFENSE

Mr. Irrelevant quickly became The Man. Purdy went 7-0 as a starter in games he finished, was just the second rookie in the Super Bowl era to have at least two scoring passes in six straight games and became just the third rookie in 52 years to win two playoff games.

Purdy is expected to be ready to return before or around Week 1, and the 49ers insulated themselves by signing Sam Darnold to join Trey Lance in reserve. The 49ers have invested three first-round picks in Lance, the No. 3 selection in 2021, but he's been injured and underwhelming, and Darnold will have a chance to beat him out to serve as the No. 2 option under center.

Darnold, the No. 3 overall pick in 2018, has a career passer rating (78.2) that ranks last among 36 QBs who have thrown at least 1,000 passes since 2018. But he went 4-2 and posted a 92.6 rating in a season-ending stretch with Carolina last year. And the 49ers gave him $3.5 million guaranteed because they believe he can take the next step with a star-studded supporting cast.

That crew includes four All-Pros — running back Christian McCaffrey, tight end George Kittle, wide receiver Deebo Samuel and left tackle Trent Williams — along with Pro Bowl fullback Kyle Juszczyk and 1,000-yard wideout Brandon Aiyuk.

The NFL's fifth-ranked offense reached another gear last year once the team acquired McCaffrey in a Week 6 mega-trade. McCaffrey had 1,210 yards from scrimmage with the 49ers, the most by a midseason acquisition in NFL history, and served as a defender-attracting magnet who created spaces for teammates. The 49ers averaged 29.8 points and 397.1 yards and went 10-1 with McCaffrey. Before the trade, they averaged 20.3 points and 340.2 yards and went 3-3.

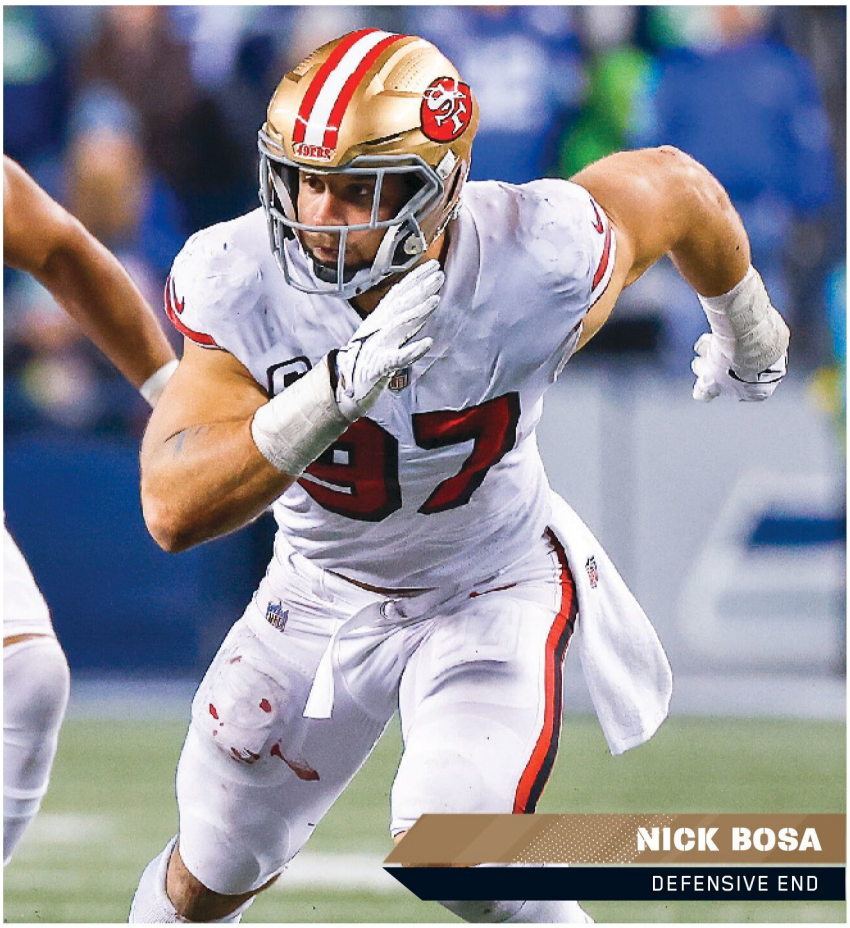
They will now have McCaffrey for a full season and return 10 offensive starters. However, the loss of right tackle Mike McGlinchey, who signed with the Broncos, is significant because they lack a proven option to replace the No. 9 overall pick in 2018. The favorite to win the job is Colton McKivitz, a 2020 fifth-round pick who has made just two of his five career starts at offensive tackle. McKivitz is expected to line up next to right guard Spencer Burford, a 2022 fourth-round pick who rotated at the position as a rookie.

It's worth noting that the front five was a source of offseason anxiety last year, when the interior featured Burford, left guard Aaron Banks and center Jake Brendel, a trio that had combined for five career starts. However, the 49ers allowed the NFL's sixth-fewest sacks (31), ranked eighth in rushing yards per game (138.8) and were ninth in yards per attempt (4.7).

DEFENSE

The NFL's top-ranked defense lost only two starters — role players in pass rusher Samson Ebukam and linebacker Azeez Al-Shaair — and added Hargrave, an interior menace coming off a career-best 11-sack season.

Hargrave joins a unit that allowed the fewest points (16.3) and yards (300.6) in the league last year and featured an All-Pro at every level. That group included linebacker Fred Warner and safety Talanoa Hufanga. And it was headlined by edge rusher Nick Bosa, the NFL's Defensive Player of the Year, who had 18.5 sacks, which ranked second in franchise history, and 48 QB hits, the most in the NFL since 2015.



JOE NICHOLSON-USA TODAY SPORTS

The 49ers ponied up for Hargrave, signing him to a four-year, $84 million deal, because their pass rush was relatively pedestrian. They ranked 10th in the NFL in sacks last season, with no players besides Bosa registering more than five. In their final two playoff games, the 49ers managed only two sacks, both at the line of scrimmage.

With Hargrave, Bosa and run-stuffing tackle Arik Armstead, the Niners have a chance to have their own fearsome foursome. They are hoping edge rusher Drake Jackson, their top draft pick in 2022, will become the final puzzle piece. But the No. 61 pick will have to improve dramatically to do so. He had three sacks in his rookie season and was inactive, a healthy scratch, in five of their last six games (including playoffs).

On the second level, Warner and Dre Greenlaw, who was one vote shy of earning second-team All-Pro honors last year, form the league's best linebacker duo. They will have a new running mate after Al-Shaair signed with the Titans, and rookie Dee Winters, a speedy sixth-round pick from TCU, could be the leading candidate to join them.

The 49ers had a league-best 20 interceptions last year and limited QBs to an 82.7 passer rating, sixth lowest in the NFL. And they will return their four season-ending starters: cornerbacks Charvarius Ward and Deommodore Lenoir, along with Hufanga and free safety Tashaun Gipson Sr., an 11-year veteran who had a team-high five picks after signing late in the preseason.

They signed slot corner Isaiah Oliver to replace Jimmie Ward, who left for the Texans. Oliver, a 2018 second-round pick of the Falcons, moved inside after two shaky seasons at outside corner.

SPECIALISTS

The 49ers are replacing an ultra-reliable kicker with a rookie. They drafted Michigan's Jake Moody in the third round, making him the fifth kicker since 2000 selected with a top-100 pick after they didn't re-sign Robbie Gould. The move will save them money, but it could add anxiety. Gould, 40, is a Pro Bowler who ranks eighth in NFL history in field-goal percentage and has made all 68 kicks in his postseason career (29 field goals, 39 extra points). Moody will be the only new face among a group that includes punter Mitch Wishnowsky and long snapper Taybor Pepper. Returner Ray-Ray McCloud III provided some needed return-game pop in his debut season: He ranked third in the NFL in yards per punt return (10.8) and was ninth in kickoff returns (23.0).

FINAL ANALYSIS

The 49ers will try to finally break through after enduring big-game heartbreak: They are one of three teams since 1970 to lose back-to-back conference title games and a Super Bowl in a four-season stretch.

If their spirit is still willing, the talent remains: Williams, McCaffrey, Kittle, Samuel, Juszczyk, Bosa, Hargrave and Warner are among the best players at their position. Their ability to end their title drought could hinge on whether Purdy can return unaffected by his elbow injury and build on his dazzling debut.

2022 RESULTS (13-4)

Sept. 11	at Chicago	L	10-19
Sept. 18	Seattle	W	27-7
Sept. 25	at Denver	L	10-11
Oct. 3	L.A. Rams	W	24-9
Oct. 9	at Carolina	W	37-15
Oct. 16	at Atlanta	L	14-28
Oct. 23	Kansas City	L	23-44
Oct. 30	at L.A. Rams	W	31-14
Nov. 13	L.A. Chargers	W	22-16
Nov. 21	vs. Arizona	W	38-10
Nov. 27	New Orleans	W	13-0
Dec. 4	Miami	W	33-17
Dec. 11	Tampa Bay	W	35-7
Dec. 15	at Seattle	W	21-13
Dec. 24	Washington	W	37-20
Jan. 1	at Las Vegas (ot)	W	37-34
Jan. 8	Arizona	W	38-13
Postseason			
Jan. 14	Seattle	W	41-23
Jan. 22	Dallas	W	19-12
Jan. 29	at Philadelphia	L	7-31

2022 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	365.6	5	3
Rushing	138.8	8	5
Passing	226.8	13	6
Scoring	26.5	6	4
Third Down %	45.0	6	3
EPA/Play	0.084	4	2
TO Differential	+13	1	1

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	300.6	1	1
Rushing	77.7	2	1
Passing	222.9	20	10
Scoring	16.3	1	1
Interceptions	20	T1	1
Sacks	44	T10	6
EPA/Play	-0.112	1	1

2022 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Jimmy Garoppolo	308	207	2,437	16	4
Brock Purdy	170	114	1,374	13	4

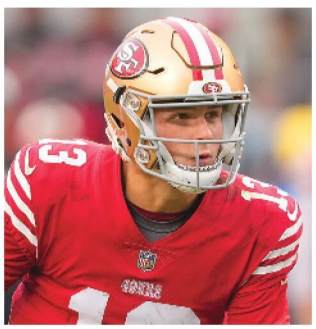
RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Christian McCaffrey	159	746	4.7	6
Jeff Wilson Jr.	92	468	5.1	2
Elijah Mitchell	45	279	6.2	2
Jordan Mason	43	258	6.0	1

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Brandon Aiyuk	78	1,015	13.0	8
George Kittle	60	765	12.8	11
Deebo Samuel	56	632	11.3	2
Christian McCaffrey	52	464	8.9	4

KICKING: Robbie Gould, 27-32 FGs, 50-51 PAT, 131 points
TACKLES: Fred Warner, 130; Dre Greenlaw, 127
SACKS: Nick Bosa, 18.5; Samson Ebukam, 5.0
INTERCEPTIONS: Tashaun Gipson Sr., 5; Talanoa Hufanga, 4

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

PASSER MAKES PITCH QB **Brock Purdy**, among the team's most important players, is also one of their lesser-paid: Purdy will earn $870,000 in base salary in the second year of his contract. His relatively modest salary explains why he made the interview rounds before the NFL Draft as a Buffalo Wild Wings pitchman. Purdy played up his revelatory rookie season while saying that the chain known for wings had surprisingly delicious burgers: "Sort of just like how I was the last draft pick last year, and then taking my opportunity to shine. So a lot of similarities there."



THIS IS RICH After playing in Super Bowl LVII in February, defensive tackle Javon Hargrave figured he might have to forfeit playing in big games to get his big payday. Instead, a team coming off a 13-win season offered him an $84 million deal. "I couldn't believe it myself," Hargrave says. "Sometimes when you're trying to go get the money, you have to go to a team that's kind of in a rebuild mode."

SELF-AWARE After the 49ers invested a third-round pick on a kicker, Michigan's Jake Moody, head coach Kyle Shanahan acknowledged it probably wasn't their most popular selection. But he noted the 49ers could have made their fan base crankier. Despite their success with late-round and undrafted rushers, the 49ers used third-round picks on Trey Sermon and Tyrion Davis-Price, respectively, in the previous two drafts. "I still can't believe we didn't take a running back," Shanahan said. The 49ers waived Sermon after his rookie season. Davis-Price averaged 2.9 yards on 34 carries in 2022.

SHE DID Running back Christian McCaffrey, known for his dual-threat versatility, will soon have yet another role: husband. McCaffrey got engaged in April to his longtime girlfriend, former Miss Universe Olivia Culpo. "I was definitely nervous," McCaffrey says. "It's a different kind of nervous. But I tricked her into saying, 'Yeah.'"

SCOUTING THE 49ERS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP SAN FRANCISCO "Talk about an organization that gets it. They scout and coach very well. Case in point: Brock Purdy, Mr. Irrelevant. His success gave them a pivot point away from Trey Lance. Once Purdy is healthy, Lance goes back to the bench. Trading Lance would have been a shortsighted move with Purdy still injured. … I don't see them missing Jimmy G [Garoppolo] that much. He played well, but he's replaceable. … Deebo Samuel makes everything better for an offense. That was a sharp investment. … I like the track that Brandon Aiyuk is on; he's trending up. … A smart re-signing: center Jake Brendel. He got high grades last year. … They'll miss Mike McGlinchey at right tackle. It got way too expensive. … Trent Williams isn't the highest paid tackle currently — Laremy Tunsil is — but for my money, Williams is better. … You got to have a better plan against George Kittle or he'll run you off the field. … The 49ers turned heads by drafting Michigan placekicker Jake Moody. … I think they were right to not pick up Javon Kinlaw's fifth-year option. … They signed the best free-agent defensive tackle in Javon Hargrave. Between him and Nick Bosa, that's a wrecking crew. … Fred Warner is the smartest and quickest off-the-ball linebacker. And as much as I like Warner, Dre Greenlaw is one tough dude. … Losing DeMeco Ryans is significant, but Steve Wilks is the best replacement they could have found outside of Vic Fangio. I like Wilks' fit with their personnel, especially Talanoa Hufanga."

DARREN YAMASHITA/USA TODAY SPORTS

2023 49ERS VETERAN ROSTER

	QUARTERBACKS	POS.	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
4	Allen, Brandon	QB	6-2	209	6	Arkansas	FA-Cin-23	D6-Jac-16
14	Darnold, Sam	QB	6-3	225	5	USC	FA-Car-23	D1-NYJ-18
5	Lance, Trey	QB	6-4	224	2	North Dakota St.	D1-21	D1-SF-21
13	Purdy, Brock	QB	6-1	220	1	Iowa State	D7-22	D7-SF-22

	RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
32	Davis-Price, Tyrion	RB	6-1	219	1	LSU	D3a-22	D3a-SF-22
44	Juszczyk, Kyle	FB	6-2	235	10	Harvard	FA-17	D4-Bal-13
24	Mason, Jordan	RB	5-11	223	1	Georgia Tech	FA-22	FA-SF-22
23	McCaffrey, Christian	RB	5-11	205	6	Stanford	T-Car-22	D1-Car-17
25	Mitchell, Elijah	RB	5-10	200	2	Louisiana	D6-21	D6-SF-21

	RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
11	Aiyuk, Brandon	WR	6-0	200	3	Arizona State	D2b-20	D2b-SF-20
17	Conley, Chris	WR	6-3	205	8	Georgia	FA-Ten-23	D3-KC-15
82	Dwelley, Ross	TE	6-5	235	5	San Diego	FA-18	FA-SF-18
47	Fumagalli, Troy	TE	6-6	248	4	Wisconsin	FA-23	D5-Den-18
6	Gray, Danny	WR	6-0	200	1	SMU	D3b-22	D3b-SF-22
15	Jennings, Jauan	WR	6-3	212	2	Tennessee	D7-20	D7-SF-20
88	Johnson, Tyron	WR	6-1	193	3	Oklahoma State	FA-23	FA-Hou-19
85	Kittle, George	TE	6-4	250	6	Iowa	D5a-17	D5a-SF-17
86	Martin, Tay	WR	6-3	185	1	Oklahoma State	FA-22	FA-SF-22
3	McCloud III, Ray-Ray	WR	5-9	190	5	Clemson	FA-22	D6-Buf-18
84	Newsome, Dazz	WR	5-10	184	2	North Carolina	FA-22	D6-Chi-21
19	Samuel, Deebo	WR	6-0	215	4	South Carolina	D2-19	D2-SF-19
89	Woerner, Charlie	TE	6-5	241	3	Georgia	D6-20	D6-SF-20

	OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
65	Banks, Aaron	OL	6-5	325	2	Notre Dame	D2-21	D2-SF-21
64	Brendel, Jake	OL	6-4	299	5	UCLA	FA-20	FA-Dal-16
74	Burford, Spencer	OL	6-4	300	1	UTSA	D4-22	D4-SF-22
55	Feliciano, Jon	C	6-4	325	8	Miami (Fla.)	FA-NYG-23	D4-LV-15
77	Gutierrez, Alfredo	OL	6-9	332	1	Tecnológico de Monterrey	FA-21	FA-SF-21
67	Ismael, Keith	OL	6-3	310	3	San Diego State	FA-22	D5-Was-20
68	McKivitz, Colton	OL	6-6	301	3	West Virginia	D5-20	D5-SF-20
76	Moore, Jaylon	OL	6-4	311	2	Western Michigan	D5a-21	D5a-SF-21
51	Poe, Jason	OL	6-1	300	1	Mercer	FA-22	FA-SF-22
75	Pryor, Matt	G/T	6-7	332	5	TCU	FA-Ind-23	D6-Phi-18
78	Watson, Leroy	OL	6-5	311	1	UTSA	FA-22	FA-Atl-22
71	Williams, Trent	T	6-5	320	13	Oklahoma	T-Was-20	D1-Was-10
63	Zakelj, Nick	OL	6-6	316	1	Fordham	D6a-22	D6a-SF-22

	DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
91	Armstead, Arik	DL	6-7	290	8	Oregon	D1-15	D1-SF-15
58	Barrett, Alex	DL	6-2	250	2	San Diego State	FA-19	FA-Det-17
97	Bosa, Nick	DL	6-4	266	4	Ohio State	D1-19	D1-SF-19
56	Bryant, Austin	DL	6-5	250	4	Clemson	FA-Det-23	D4-Det-19
62	Davidson, Marlon	DL	6-3	278	2	Auburn	FA-23	D2-Atl-20
93	Davis, Kalia	DL	6-2	310	1	UCF	D6b-22	D6b-SF-22
94	Ferrell, Clelin	DL	6-4	265	4	Clemson	FA-LV-23	D1a-LV-19
90	Givens, Kevin	DL	6-1	285	3	Penn State	FA-19	FA-SF-19
98	Hargrave, Javon	DL	6-2	305	7	South Carolina St.	FA-Phi-23	D3-Pit-16
92	Hyder Jr., Kerry	DL	6-2	275	7	Texas Tech	FA-Sea-22	FA-NYJ-14
95	Jackson, Drake	DL	6-4	273	1	USC	D2-22	D2-SF-22
99	Kinlaw, Javon	DT	6-5	319	3	South Carolina	D1a-20	D1a-SF-20
96	McGill, T.Y.	DL	6-0	295	7	NC State	FA-22	FA-Sea-15

	LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
48	Burks, Oren	LB	6-3	233	5	Vanderbilt	FA-GB-22	D3-GB-18
45	Flannigan-Fowles, D.	LB	6-2	223	3	Arizona	FA-19	FA-SF-19
57	Greenlaw, Dre	LB	6-0	230	4	Arkansas	D5-19	D5-SF-19
40	McCrary-Ball, Marcelino	LB	6-0	214	1	Indiana	FA-22	FA-SF-22
59	Robinson, Curtis	LB	6-3	235	2	Stanford	FA-21	FA-Den-21
54	Warner, Fred	LB	6-3	230	5	BYU	D3a-18	D3a-SF-18

	DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
31	Gipson Sr., Tashaun	S	6-1	212	11	Wyoming	FA-22	FA-Cle-12
38	Hartsfield, Myles	DB	5-11	210	3	Ole Miss	FA-Car-23	FA-Car-20
41	Hawkins, Tayler	S	6-1	205	1	San Diego State	FA-22	FA-SF-22
29	Hufanga, Talanoa	S	6-0	200	2	USC	D5c-21	D5c-SF-21
43	Knight, Qwuantrezz	CB	6-0	199	1	UCLA	FA-22	FA-SF-22
2	Lenoir, Deommodore	DB	5-10	200	2	Oregon	D5b-21	D5b-SF-21
30	Odum, George	S	6-1	202	5	Central Arkansas	FA-Ind-22	FA-Ind-18
22	Oliver, Isaiah	CB	6-0	202	5	Colorado	FA-Atl-23	D2-Atl-18
47	Parker, A.J.	CB	5-11	185	2	Kansas State	FA-23	FA-Det-21
35	Swilling, Tre	CB	6-1	196	1	Georgia Tech	FA-23	FA-Ten-22
20	Thomas, Ambry	CB	6-0	190	2	Michigan	D3b-21	D3b-SF-21
7	Ward, Charvarius	CB	6-1	196	5	Middle Tennessee	FA-KC-22	FA-Dal-18
26	Womack III, Samuel	CB	5-10	189	1	Toledo	D5-22	D5-SF-22

	SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
10	Gonzalez, Zane	K	6-0	200	6	Arizona State	T-Car-23	D7-Cle-17
46	Pepper, Taybor	LS	6-4	245	5	Michigan State	FA-20	FA-GB-17
18	Wishnowsky, Mitch	P	6-2	220	4	Utah	D4-19	D4-SF-19

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	19	Deebo Samuel	15	Jauan Jennings
WR	11	Brandon Aiyuk	3	Ray-Ray McCloud III
LT	71	Trent Williams	75	Matt Pryor
LG	65	Aaron Banks	62	Jason Poe
C	64	Jake Brendel	63	Nick Zakelj
RG	74	Spencer Burford	55	Jon Feliciano
RT	68	Colton McKivitz	76	Jaylon Moore
TE	85	George Kittle	81	Cameron Latu (R)
QB	13	Brock Purdy	5	Trey Lance
RB	23	Christian McCaffrey	25	Elijah Mitchell
FB	44	Kyle Juszczyk	49	Jack Colletto (R)

DEFENSE

DE	97	Nick Bosa	94	Clelin Ferrell
DT	91	Arik Armstead	90	Kevin Givens
DT	98	Javon Hargrave	99	Javon Kinlaw
DE	95	Drake Jackson	92	Kerry Hyder Jr.
ILB	54	Fred Warner	48	Oren Burks
ILB	57	Dre Greenlaw	53	Dee Winters (R)
WLB	45	Dem. Flannigan-Fowles	50	Jalen Graham (R)
CB	7	Charvarius Ward	22	Isaiah Oliver
CB	2	Deommodore Lenoir	26	Samuel Womack III
SS	29	Talanoa Hufanga	38	Myles Hartsfield
FS	31	Tashaun Gipson Sr.	27	Ji'Ayir Brown (R)

SPECIALISTS

K	4	Jake Moody (R)	KR	3	Ray-Ray McCloud III
P	18	Mitch Wishnowsky	PR	3	Ray-Ray McCloud III

73

Nick Bosa won Defensive Player of the Year partly because he recorded a league-high 73 QB pressures, according to NextGenStats.

49ERS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: C+

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
3.	Ji'Ayir Brown	S	5-11	202	Penn State
3.	Jake Moody	K	6-1	210	Michigan
3.	Cameron Latu	TE	6-5	244	Alabama
5.	Darrell Luter Jr.	CB	6-0	190	South Alabama
5.	Robert Beal Jr.	DE	6-4	250	Georgia
6.	Dee Winters	LB	5-11	227	TCU
7.	Brayden Willis	TE	6-4	240	Oklahoma
7.	Ronnie Bell	WR	6-0	192	Michigan
7.	Jalen Graham	LB	6-3	220	Purdue

The 49ers' lack of a pick in the first two rounds and their stacked roster make it likely that their picks will have a modest first-year impact. Jake Moody is the most obvious exception: The 49ers are relying on him to successfully replace Robbie Gould after making him the highest-drafted kicker since 2016. The 49ers traded up 15 spots to grab Ji'Ayir Brown with an eye to him taking over at free safety in 2024: Tashaun Gipson Sr., entering his 12th season, is playing on a one-year contract. Cameron Latu has a strong chance to serve as George Kittle's primary backup after the 49ers' reserve tight ends combined for seven catches in 2022. Dee Winters is a prototypical 49ers' linebacker — speedy and undersized — and is a candidate to start alongside Fred Warner and Dre Greenlaw.

SEAHAWKS

NFC WEST FORECAST

1

2023 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 10	L.A. Rams	4:25
Sept. 17	at Detroit	1:00
Sept. 24	Carolina	4:05
Oct. 2	at N.Y. Giants	8:15
Oct. 8	BYE	
Oct. 15	at Cincinnati	1:00
Oct. 22	Arizona	4:05
Oct. 29	Cleveland	4:05
Nov. 5	at Baltimore	1:00
Nov. 12	Washington	4:25
Nov. 19	at L.A. Rams	4:25
Nov. 23	San Francisco	8:20
Nov. 30	at Dallas	8:15
Dec. 10	at San Francisco	4:05
Dec. 17	Philadelphia	4:25
Dec. 24	at Tennessee	1:00
Dec. 31	Pittsburgh	4:05
Jan. 7	at Arizona	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

THE COACHES

Head Coach: Pete Carroll
Record With Team: 128-81-1
Career Record: 161-112-1
Offensive Coordinator: Shane Waldron
Defensive Coordinator: Clint Hurtt
Special Teams Coordinator: Larry Izzo
Quarterbacks: Greg Olson
Run Game Coordinator/Running Backs: Chad Morton
Passing Game Coordinator/Wide Receivers: Sanjay Lal
Tight Ends: Pat McPherson
Offensive Line: Andy Dickerson
Linebackers: John Glenn
Defensive Passing Game Coordinator/Defensive Backs: Karl Scott
Secondary: Roy Anderson

Going into the 2022 season, the Seahawks were expected to be one of the worst teams in the league after trading quarterback Russell Wilson to the Denver Broncos. Instead, head coach Pete Carroll guided his team to the playoffs, where it lost to the San Francisco 49ers in the NFC wild-card round. Now, making it back to the postseason feels like the bare minimum for his team, which is coming into the 2023 season with an improved roster.

OFFENSE

Geno Smith stepped up in a big way in 2022 and was rewarded with a three-year contract worth up to $105 million (including signing bonus and incentives). Smith was named to his first Pro Bowl after finishing eighth in the NFL with 4,282 passing yards and fourth with 30 touchdowns. He's in a great position to reprise if not improve upon those numbers in 2023. Rookie wide receiver Jaxon Smith-Njigba is going to be a huge part of that improvement. The 20th overall pick was widely regarded as the best wideout in the draft, and offensive coordinator Shane Waldron is going to be able to deploy him in a lot of different ways. The Ohio State product probably will spend most of his time in the slot, where he'll be a matchup nightmare for opposing cornerbacks with Pro Bowlers Tyler Lockett and DK Metcalf lined up on the outside.

General manager John Schneider also added some reinforcements on the offensive line — most importantly, center Evan Brown. Brown was the anchor of the Detroit Lions' line in 2022, which was widely considered one of the best in the league, before signing with Seattle in free agency. Combining Brown with second-year tackles Charles Cross and Abraham Lucas, who were arguably one of the best tackle pairings in the NFL in 2022 as rookies, should allow the Seahawks offensive line to improve on its mark of 46 sacks allowed.

Behind that line is the two-headed monster of Kenneth Walker III and second-round draft pick Zach Charbonnet (UCLA). Even after sitting behind Rashaad Penny for the first month of 2022, Walker still rushed for 1,050 yards and nine touchdowns in 15 games as a rookie. With his first full season as the starter ahead of him — and Penny now in Philadelphia — Walker should improve upon those numbers. Charbonnet brings extra elements of both lightning and thunder to the backfield; he's a big, physical player who also has surprising speed. He could be relied upon as the primary third-down back since he's an excellent receiver.

DEFENSE

It appears that Carroll and Schneider are doing their best to rebuild the Legion of Boom. They've spent significant money and draft capital over the past few seasons to acquire safeties Jamal Adams and Quandre Diggs, who when healthy comprise one of the better safety tandems in the NFL. But that didn't stop them from also signing versatile safety Julian Love in free agency; Love most likely will start at the nickel.

The Seahawks also found a diamond in the rough in the 2022 draft: cornerback Tariq Woolen. The fifth-round pick finished third in the Defensive Rookie of the Year voting. Still needing some extra reinforcements at cornerback, Schneider did something unprecedented for his regime, using a premium pick on the position. Before selecting Illinois' Devon Witherspoon fifth overall, Schneider had not picked a cornerback earlier than 90th overall. Witherspoon

DARREN YAMASHITA/USA TODAY SPORTS

is a great fit for the defense; he brings a physical presence and should slot quite nicely into Carroll's Cover-3 system as a player who can sit in a zone when needed as well as stick to an opposing team's top receiver.

Outside linebackers Darrell Taylor and Uchenna Nwosu broke out in a big way last season, recording 9.5 sacks apiece in 2022. The tandem should have an opportunity to improve on those numbers after the signing of defensive end Dre'Mont Jones in free agency to a three-year, $51 million deal. Jones brings 6.5 sacks of his own and could help improve a pass rush that was excellent in 2022.

Conversely, the Seahawks' run defense was questionable at best in 2022, allowing the third-most rushing yards in the league. Along with his pass-rush prowess, Jones brings a 4.5 percent run stuff rate, which was 10th best among all interior defenders in 2022, according to NFL Next Gen Stats. Schneider and Co. also decided to invest heavily in the front seven during the draft, selecting three defensive linemen, including Mississippi State's Cameron Young in the fourth round. Young is a perfect nose tackle in Seattle's defensive scheme and should be the favorite to come out of camp as the starter.

Bringing in Jones and Young, along with linebackers Devin Bush and the return of Bobby Wagner, should go a long way towards improving the run defense. Both are great in short areas and should have no problem shooting gaps and moving downhill to limit gains and make plays in the backfield. If the run defense can go from one of the worst in the league to merely average, the Seahawks could revisit their old habit of fielding a top-five defense.

SPECIALISTS

In the kicking game, consistency is the name of the game, and Seattle has had one of the best groups in the NFL for several years. Punter Michael Dickson is one of the best punters in the NFL and averaged 48.5 yards per punt in 2022, the second-best mark of his career. Kicker Jason Myers' 34 made field goals were good enough to tie him for second in the league. In the return game, if DeeJay Dallas can rip off a few big runbacks, it could help the already high-flying Seahawks offense reach greater heights.

FINAL ANALYSIS

It's clear to see that the Wilson trade was the best thing for this organization, and it feels as if the Seahawks are getting close to Super Bowl contention. They should be taken seriously as a playoff contender, as their roster is among the best in the NFC, and the battle for the NFC West title with the San Francisco 49ers will be a compelling season-long storyline.

2022 RESULTS (9-8)

Sept. 12	Denver	W	17-16
Sept. 18	at San Francisco	L	7-27
Sept. 25	Atlanta	L	23-27
Oct. 2	at Detroit	W	48-45
Oct. 9	at New Orleans	L	32-39
Oct. 16	Arizona	W	19-9
Oct. 23	at L.A. Chargers	W	37-23
Oct. 30	N.Y. Giants	W	27-13
Nov. 6	at Arizona	W	31-21
Nov. 13	vs. Tampa Bay	L	16-21
Nov. 27	Las Vegas (ot)	L	34-40
Dec. 4	at L.A. Rams	W	27-23
Dec. 11	Carolina	L	24-30
Dec. 15	San Francisco	L	13-21
Dec. 24	at Kansas City	L	10-24
Jan. 1	N.Y. Jets	W	23-6
Jan. 8	L.A. Rams (ot)	W	19-16
Postseason			
Jan. 14	San Francisco	L	23-41

2022 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	351.5	13	6
Rushing	120.1	18	11
Passing	231.4	T11	5
Scoring	23.9	9	6
Third Down %	37.8	20	11
EPA/Play	0.013	13	7
TO Differential	+2	T12	T6

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	361.7	26	12
Rushing	150.2	30	15
Passing	211.5	13	7
Scoring	23.6	25	12
Interceptions	14	T12	T7
Sacks	45	T7	T4
EPA/Play	0.031	26	11

2022 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Geno Smith	572	399	4,282	30	11

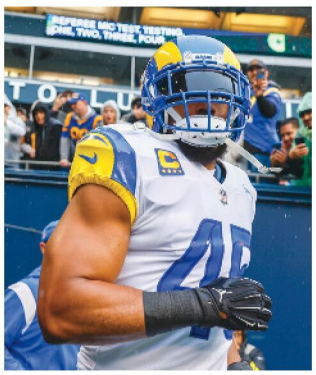
RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Kenneth Walker III	228	1,050	4.6	9
Geno Smith	68	366	5.4	1
Rashaad Penny	57	346	6.1	2
DeeJay Dallas	35	186	5.3	0

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
DK Metcalf	90	1,048	11.6	6
Tyler Lockett	84	1,033	12.3	9
Noah Fant	50	486	9.7	4
Will Dissly	34	349	10.3	3
Marquise Goodwin	27	387	14.3	4

KICKING: Jason Myers, 34-37 FGs, 41-42 PAT, 143 points
TACKLES: Jordyn Brooks, 161; Cody Barton, 136
SACKS: Uchenna Nwosu, 9.5; Darrell Taylor, 9.5
INTERCEPTIONS: Tariq Woolen, 6; Quandre Diggs, 4

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

WAGNER COMES HOME **Bobby Wagner's** return to Seattle is a most welcome development for fans. Before spending one year with the Los Angeles Rams, Wagner had spent his entire career with the Seahawks and became a valued member of the community. He spends a lot of his free time assisting the youth basketball program of the Seattle Rotary Boys and Girls Club, providing time and financial support.



A COMPETITIVE HOUSEHOLD Rookie Jaxon Smith-Njigba brings an athletic bloodline with him to Seattle, as his older brother Canaan Smith-Njigba plays professional baseball in the Pittsburgh Pirates' organization. Canaan was drafted in the fourth round of the 2017 MLB Draft by the New York Yankees and made his major league debut with Pittsburgh in 2022.

HOMEBODY Right tackle Abraham Lucas has played football in the state of Washington for his entire life. He played his high school ball at Archbishop Murphy High in Everett, Wash., just north of Seattle, and elected to play collegiately for Washington State in Pullman, before the Seahawks selected him in the third round of the 2022 NFL Draft.

RIQ THE FREAK "Riq The Freak" is a pretty obvious nickname for the 6-foot-4, 210 pound Tariq Woolen, who ran a 4.26 40-yard dash at the NFL Combine in 2022. However, defensive coordinator Clint Hurtt says that when Woolen arrived to rookie minicamp last year, the now-second-year player "couldn't catch a cold in Alaska." Now, Woolen has an opportunity to lead the league in interceptions after grabbing six, which tied him for the league lead in 2022.

HE EATS WHAT? One thing that nobody can doubt is DK Metcalf's physical ability. The 6-4, 235-pound receiver is one of the most imposing players in the NFL, although his diet does not reflect that. In a 2022 interview, Metcalf claimed that he eats one meal a day and supplements his diet with "three or four" bags of candy.

SCOUTING THE SEAHAWKS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP SEATTLE "I think the Seahawks were right to not go after one of these rookie quarterbacks. This wasn't a great quarterback class, and they have proven they can win with Geno Smith. Between having DK Metcalf and Tyler Lockett already and adding Jaxon Smith-Njigba, they're set at wide receiver. … Smith's resurgence has surprised many, proving he can help Seattle compete after years of mediocrity with the Jets. The team seems committed to building around him, not searching for a younger guy. … Seattle defied expectations after trading Russell Wilson, with Smith becoming a Pro Bowl selection and achieving a 9-8 record, while Denver floundered under Wilson, and coach Nathaniel Hackett was fired. Smith's Pro Bowl season is a testament to his growth, not a fluke. … Charles Cross was a great draft pick. … Seattle has got one of the better young running back tandems in Kenneth Walker III and Zach Charbonnet. … Devon Witherspoon, the corner they drafted, is rock-solid. He can play in press coverage. He's fast, too. … Dre'Mont Jones was one of the best free-agent signings. … Bringing back Bobby Wagner gives them leadership and toughness inside. … Tariq Woolen has the length and ball skills teams covet. … This defense could come together very nicely this fall."

JOE NICHOLSON/USA TODAY SPORTS

2023 SEAHAWKS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS.	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
2 Lock, Drew	QB	6-4	228	4	Missouri	T-Den-22	D2b-Den-19
7 Smith, Geno	QB	6-3	221	10	West Virginia	FA-19	D2-NYJ-13
RUNNING BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
44 Bellore, Nick	FB	6-1	250	12	Central Michigan	FA-19	FA-NYJ-11
31 Dallas, DeeJay	RB	5-10	214	3	Miami (Fla.)	D4b-20	D4b-Sea-20
9 Walker III, Kenneth	RB	5-9	211	1	Michigan State	D2b-22	D2b-Sea-22
RECEIVERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
89 Dissly, Will	TE	6-4	265	5	Washington	D4-18	D4-Sea-18
1 Eskridge, Dee	WR	5-9	190	2	Western Michigan	D2-21	D2-Sea-21
87 Fant, Noah	TE	6-4	249	4	Iowa	T-Den-22	D1-Den-19
88 Johnson, Cade	WR	5-10	184	2	South Dakota St.	FA-21	FA-Sea-21
16 Lockett, Tyler	WR	5-10	182	8	Kansas State	D3-15	D3-Sea-15
85 Mabry, Tyler	TE	6-3	247	3	Maryland	FA-20	FA-Sea-20
14 Metcalf, DK	WR	6-4	235	4	Ole Miss	D2b-19	D2b-Sea-19
84 Parkinson, Colby	TE	6-7	251	3	Stanford	D4a-20	D4a-Sea-20
13 Thompson, Cody	WR	6-2	205	4	Toledo	FA-19	FA-KC-19
86 Winston Jr., Easop	WR	5-11	190	2	Washington State	FA-23	FA-LAR-20
83 Young, Dareke	WR	6-2	224	1	Lenoir-Rhyne	D7b-22	D7b-Sea-22
OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
63 Brown, Evan	C/G	6-3	320	4	SMU	FA-Det-23	FA-NYG-18
67 Cross, Charles	T	6-5	311	1	Mississippi State	D1-22	D1-Sea-22
74 Curhan, Jake	T	6-6	316	2	California	FA-21	FA-Sea-21
75 Eiland, Greg	T	6-8	321	2	Mississippi State	FA-21	FA-Sea-21
78 Forsythe, Stone	T	6-8	307	2	Florida	D6-21	D6-Sea-21
60 Haynes, Phil	G	6-4	322	4	Wake Forest	D4b-19	D4b-Sea-19
62 Hunt, Joey	C/G	6-2	299	7	TCU	D6-16	D6-Sea-16
68 Lewis, Damien	G	6-2	327	3	LSU	D3-20	D3-Sea-20
72 Lucas, Abraham	T	6-6	322	1	Washington State	D3-22	D3-Sea-22
76 McKenzie, Jalen	T	6-5	315	1	USC	FA-22	FA-Ten-22
DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
95 Adams, Myles	DT	6-2	290	3	Rice	FA-20	FA-Car-20
55 Jones, Dre'Mont	DE	6-3	281	4	Ohio State	FA-Den-23	D3-Den-19
91 Mone, Bryan	DT	6-3	345	4	Michigan	FA-19	FA-Sea-19
90 Reed, Jarran	DE	6-3	307	7	Alabama	FA-GB-23	D2-Sea-16
98 Robinson, Alton	DL	6-3	259	3	Syracuse	D5-20	D5-Sea-20
LINEBACKERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
56 Brooks, Jordyn	LB	6-0	240	3	Texas Tech	D1-20	D1-Sea-20
11 Bush, Devin	LB	5-11	234	4	Michigan	FA-Pit-23	D1-Pit-19
70 Garrett, Chris	LB	6-4	245	2	Concordia-St. Paul	FA-22	D7-LAR-21
51 Irvin, Bruce	LB	6-3	248	11	West Virginia	D1-12	D1-Sea-12
50 Jones, Vi	LB	6-2	225	1	NC State	FA-22	FA-Sea-22
53 Mafe, Boye	LB	6-4	261	1	Minnesota	D2a-22	D2a-Sea-22
10 Nwosu, Uchenna	LB	6-2	251	5	USC	FA-LAC-22	D2-LAC-18
49 Onujiogu, Joshua	LB	6-2	252	1	Framingham State	FA-22	FA-Sea-22
59 Rhattigan, Jon	LB	6-0	236	2	Army	FA-21	FA-Sea-21
92 Smith, Tyreke	LB	6-3	255	1	Ohio State	D5b-22	D5b-Sea-22
52 Taylor, Darrell	LB	6-4	267	3	Tennessee	D2-20	D2-Sea-20
54 Wagner, Bobby	LB	6-0	241	11	Utah State	FA-LAR-23	D2-Sea-12
DEFENSIVE BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
33 Adams, Jamal	S	6-1	213	6	LSU	T-NYJ-20	D1-NYJ-17
35 Blount, Joey	S	6-1	201	1	Virginia	FA-22	FA-Sea-22
22 Brown, Tre	CB	5-10	185	2	Oklahoma	D4-21	D4-Sea-21
8 Bryant, Coby	CB	6-1	193	1	Cincinnati	D4-22	D4-Sea-22
21 Burns, Artie	CB	6-0	187	5	Miami (Fla.)	FA-Chi-22	D1-Pit-16
6 Diggs, Quandre	S	5-9	197	8	Texas	T-Det-19	D6-Det-15
24 Dunn, Isaiah	CB	6-0	193	2	Oregon State	W-NYJ-22	FA-NYJ-21
30 Jackson, Mike	CB	6-1	210	4	Miami (Fla.)	FA-21	D5-Dal-19
20 Love, Julian	S	5-11	195	4	Notre Dame	FA-NYG-23	D4-NYG-19
27 Woolen, Tariq	CB	6-4	210	1	UTSA	D5a-22	D5a-Sea-22
SPECIALISTS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
4 Dickson, Michael	P	6-2	208	5	Texas	D5c-18	D5c-Sea-18
5 Myers, Jason	K	5-10	190	8	Marist	FA-NYJ-19	FA-Jac-15

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	14	DK Metcalf	1	Dee Eskridge
WR	16	Tyler Lockett	83	Dareke Young
WR	11	Jaxon Smith-Njigba (R)	13	Cody Thompson
LT	67	Charles Cross	78	Stone Forsythe
LG	68	Damien Lewis	62	Joey Hunt
C	63	Evan Brown	51	Olu Oluwatimi (R)
RG	60	Phil Haynes	60	Anthony Bradford (R)
RT	72	Abraham Lucas	76	Jalen McKenzie
TE	87	Noah Fant	89	Will Dissly
QB	7	Geno Smith	2	Drew Lock
RB	9	Kenneth Walker III	26	Zach Charbonnet (R)

DEFENSE

DE	55	Dre'Mont Jones	58	Derick Hall (R)
NT	93	Cameron Young (R)	91	Bryan Mone
DT	90	Jarran Reed	98	Alton Robinson
OLB	52	Darrell Taylor	92	Tyreke Smith
ILB	56	Jordyn Brooks	59	Jon Rhattigan
ILB	54	Bobby Wagner	0	Devin Bush
OLB	10	Uchenna Nwosu	53	Boye Mafe
CB	21	Devon Witherspoon (R)	20	Julian Love
CB	27	Tariq Woolen	21	Artie Burns
SS	33	Jamal Adams	35	Joey Blount
FS	6	Quandre Diggs	32	Jerrick Reed II (R)

SPECIALISTS

K	5	Jason Myers	KR	31	DeeJay Dallas
P	4	Michael Dickson	PR	31	DeeJay Dallas

35.38

Cornerback Tariq Woolen allowed an average of only 35.38 yards in coverage per game during his remarkable rookie season, according to Pro Football Focus.

SEAHAWKS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: A-

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Devon Witherspoon	CB	6-0	180	Illinois
1.	Jaxon Smith-Njigba	WR	6-1	200	Ohio State
2.	Derick Hall	DE	6-3	252	Auburn
2.	Zach Charbonnet	RB	6-1	220	UCLA
4.	Anthony Bradford	OL	6-5	345	LSU
4.	Cameron Young	DT	6-3	304	Mississippi State
5.	Mike Morris	DE	6-6	292	Michigan
5.	Olu Oluwatimi	C	6-2	309	Michigan
6.	Jerrick Reed II	S	5-10	196	New Mexico
7.	Kenny McIntosh	RB	6-0	210	Georgia

Highlighted by the consensus top-rated cornerback and wide receiver, respectively, in Devon Witherspoon and Jaxon Smith-Njigba, the Seahawks addressed a lot of needs. Both should be considered instant starters who will contend for Rookie of the Year honors. Running back Zach Charbonnet should be considered the primary third-down back going into the season. Fourth-round defensive tackle Cameron Young looks like he can come in and start from Day 1. Defensive ends Derick Hall and Mike Morris should be important parts of the rotation, and they will be asked to stuff the run a lot early on.

2023 NFL SCHEDULE

WEEK 1

Thursday, September 7
Detroit at Kansas City

Sunday, September 10
Carolina at Atlanta
Cincinnati at Cleveland
Jacksonville at Indianapolis
Tampa Bay at Minnesota
Tennessee at New Orleans
San Francisco at Pittsburgh
Arizona at Washington
Houston at Baltimore
Green Bay at Chicago
Las Vegas at Denver
Philadelphia at New England
Miami at L.A. Chargers
L.A. Rams at Seattle
Dallas at N.Y. Giants

Monday, September 11
Buffalo at N.Y. Jets

WEEK 2

Thursday, September 14
Minnesota at Philadelphia

Sunday, September 17
Green Bay at Atlanta
Las Vegas at Buffalo
Baltimore at Cincinnati
Seattle at Detroit
L.A. Chargers at Tennessee
Chicago at Tampa Bay
Kansas City at Jacksonville
Indianapolis at Houston
San Francisco at L.A. Rams
N.Y. Giants at Arizona
N.Y. Jets at Dallas
Washington at Denver
Miami at New England

Monday, September 18
New Orleans at Carolina
Cleveland at Pittsburgh

WEEK 3

Thursday, September 21
N.Y. Giants at San Francisco

Sunday, September 24
Tennessee at Cleveland
Atlanta at Detroit
New Orleans at Green Bay
Denver at Miami
L.A. Chargers at Minnesota
New England at N.Y. Jets
Buffalo at Washington
Houston at Jacksonville
Indianapolis at Baltimore
Carolina at Seattle
Chicago at Kansas City
Dallas at Arizona
Pittsburgh at Las Vegas

Monday, September 25
Philadelphia at Tampa Bay
L.A. Rams at Cincinnati

WEEK 4

Thursday, September 28
Detroit at Green Bay

Sunday, October 1
Atlanta vs. Jacksonville (London)
Miami at Buffalo
Denver at Chicago
Baltimore at Cleveland
Cincinnati at Tennessee
L.A. Rams at Indianapolis
Tampa Bay at New Orleans
Washington at Philadelphia
Minnesota at Carolina
Pittsburgh at Houston
Las Vegas at L.A. Chargers
New England at Dallas
Arizona at San Francisco
Kansas City at N.Y. Jets

Monday, October 2
Seattle at N.Y. Giants

WEEK 5

Thursday, October 5
Chicago at Washington

Sunday, October 8
Jacksonville vs. Buffalo (London)
Houston at Atlanta
Carolina at Detroit
Tennessee at Indianapolis
N.Y. Giants at Miami
New Orleans at New England
Baltimore at Pittsburgh
Philadelphia at L.A. Rams
Cincinnati at Arizona
N.Y. Jets at Denver
Kansas City at Minnesota
Dallas at San Francisco

Monday, October 9
Green Bay at Las Vegas

Bye: Cleveland, L.A. Chargers, Seattle, Tampa Bay

WEEK 6

Thursday, October 12
Denver at Kansas City

Sunday, October 15
Baltimore vs. Tennessee (London)
Washington at Atlanta
Minnesota at Chicago
Seattle at Cincinnati
San Francisco at Cleveland
Carolina at Miami
Detroit at Tampa Bay
Indianapolis at Jacksonville
New Orleans at Houston
New England at Las Vegas
Arizona at L.A. Rams
Philadelphia at N.Y. Jets
N.Y. Giants at Buffalo

Monday, October 16
Dallas at L.A. Chargers

Bye: Green Bay, Pittsburgh

WEEK 7

Thursday, October 19
Jacksonville at New Orleans

Sunday, October 22
Las Vegas at Chicago
Cleveland at Indianapolis
Buffalo at New England
Washington at N.Y. Giants
Atlanta at Tampa Bay
Detroit at Baltimore
Pittsburgh at L.A. Rams
Arizona at Seattle
Green Bay at Denver
L.A. Chargers at Kansas City
Miami at Philadelphia

Monday, October 23
San Francisco at Minnesota

Bye: Carolina, Cincinnati, Dallas, Houston, N.Y. Jets, Tennessee

WEEK 8

Thursday, October 26
Tampa Bay at Buffalo

Sunday, October 29
L.A. Rams at Dallas
Minnesota at Green Bay
Atlanta at Tennessee
New Orleans at Indianapolis
New England at Miami
N.Y. Jets at N.Y. Giants
Jacksonville at Pittsburgh
Philadelphia at Washington
Houston at Carolina
Cleveland at Seattle
Kansas City at Denver
Baltimore at Arizona
Cincinnati at San Francisco
Chicago at L.A. Chargers

Monday, October 30
Las Vegas at Detroit

WEEK 9

Thursday, November 2
Tennessee at Pittsburgh

Sunday, November 5
Miami vs. Kansas City (Frankfurt)
Minnesota at Atlanta
Arizona at Cleveland
L.A. Rams at Green Bay
Washington at New England
Chicago at New Orleans
Seattle at Baltimore
Tampa Bay at Houston
Indianapolis at Carolina
N.Y. Giants at Las Vegas
Dallas at Philadelphia
Buffalo at Cincinnati

Monday, November 6
L.A. Chargers at N.Y. Jets

Bye: Denver, Detroit, Jacksonville, San Francisco

WEEK 10

Thursday, November 9
Carolina at Chicago

Sunday, November 12
Indianapolis vs. New England (Frankfurt)
Houston at Cincinnati
New Orleans at Minnesota
Green Bay at Pittsburgh
Tennessee at Tampa Bay
San Francisco at Jacksonville
Cleveland at Baltimore
Atlanta at Arizona
Detroit at L.A. Chargers
N.Y. Giants at Dallas
Washington at Seattle
N.Y. Jets at Las Vegas

Monday, November 13
Denver at Buffalo

Bye: Kansas City, L.A. Rams, Miami, Philadelphia

WEEK 11

Thursday, November 16
Cincinnati at Baltimore

Sunday, November 19
Pittsburgh at Cleveland
Chicago at Detroit
L.A. Chargers at Green Bay
Las Vegas at Miami
N.Y. Giants at Washington
Dallas at Carolina
Tennessee at Jacksonville
Arizona at Houston
Tampa Bay at San Francisco
N.Y. Jets at Buffalo
Seattle at L.A. Rams
Minnesota at Denver

Monday, November 20
Philadelphia at Kansas City

Bye: Atlanta, Indianapolis, New England, New Orleans

WEEK 12

Thursday, November 23
Green Bay at Detroit
Washington at Dallas
San Francisco at Seattle

Friday, November 24
Miami at N.Y. Jets

Sunday, November 26
New Orleans at Atlanta
Pittsburgh at Cincinnati
Carolina at Tennessee
Tampa Bay at Indianapolis
New England at N.Y. Giants
Jacksonville at Houston
Cleveland at Denver
L.A. Rams at Arizona
Kansas City at Las Vegas
Buffalo at Philadelphia
Baltimore at L.A. Chargers

Monday, November 27
Chicago at Minnesota

WEEK 13

Thursday, November 30
Seattle at Dallas

Sunday, December 3
Indianapolis at Tennessee
L.A. Chargers at New England
Detroit at New Orleans
Atlanta at N.Y. Jets
Arizona at Pittsburgh
Carolina at Tampa Bay
Miami at Washington
Denver at Houston
Cleveland at L.A. Rams
San Francisco at Philadelphia
Kansas City at Green Bay

Monday, December 4
Cincinnati at Jacksonville

Bye: Buffalo, Chicago, Las Vegas, Minnesota, N.Y. Giants, Baltimore

WEEK 14

Thursday, December 7
New England at Pittsburgh

Sunday, December 10
Tampa Bay at Atlanta
Detroit at Chicago
Indianapolis at Cincinnati
Jacksonville at Cleveland
Carolina at New Orleans
Houston at N.Y. Jets
L.A. Rams at Baltimore
Minnesota at Las Vegas
Seattle at San Francisco
Buffalo at Kansas City
Denver at L.A. Chargers
Philadelphia at Dallas

Monday, December 11
Tennessee at Miami
Green Bay at N.Y. Giants

Bye: Arizona, Washington

WEEK 15

Thursday, December 14
L.A. Chargers at Las Vegas

Sunday, December 17
Minnesota at Cincinnati
Chicago at Cleveland
Denver at Detroit
Pittsburgh at Indianapolis
Atlanta at Carolina
Tampa Bay at Green Bay
Houston at Tennessee
N.Y. Jets at Miami
N.Y. Giants at New Orleans
Washington at L.A. Rams
San Francisco at Arizona
Dallas at Buffalo
Philadelphia at Seattle
Baltimore at Jacksonville

Monday, December 18
Kansas City at New England

WEEK 16

Thursday, December 21
New Orleans at L.A. Rams

Saturday, December 23
Cincinnati at Pittsburgh
Buffalo at L.A. Chargers

Sunday, December 24
Indianapolis at Atlanta
Seattle at Tennessee
Detroit at Minnesota
Washington at N.Y. Jets
Green Bay at Carolina
Cleveland at Houston
Jacksonville at Tampa Bay
Arizona at Chicago
Dallas at Miami
New England at Denver

Monday, December 25
Las Vegas at Kansas City
N.Y. Giants at Philadelphia
Baltimore at San Francisco

WEEK 17

Thursday, December 28
N.Y. Jets at Cleveland

Saturday, December 30
Detroit at Dallas

Sunday, December 31
New England at Buffalo
Atlanta at Chicago
Las Vegas at Indianapolis
L.A. Rams at N.Y Giants
Arizona at Philadelphia
New Orleans at Tampa Bay
San Francisco at Washington
Carolina at Jacksonville
Miami at Baltimore
Tennessee at Houston
Pittsburgh at Seattle
L.A. Chargers at Denver
Cincinnati at Kansas City
Green Bay at Minnesota

WEEK 18

Sunday, January 7
Cleveland at Cincinnati
Minnesota at Detroit
Chicago at Green Bay
Jacksonville at Tennessee
Houston at Indianapolis
Denver at Las Vegas
Buffalo at Miami
N.Y. Jets at New England
Atlanta at New Orleans
Philadelphia at N.Y. Giants
Seattle at Arizona
Kansas City at L.A. Chargers
L.A. Rams at San Francisco
Dallas at Washington
Tampa Bay at Carolina
Pittsburgh at Baltimore

NFL POSTSEASON

Super Wild Card Weekend
Saturday, January 13, 2024
Sunday, January 14, 2024
Monday, January 15, 2024

Divisional Playoffs
Saturday, January 20, 2024
Sunday, January 21, 2024

AFC and NFC Championship
Sunday, January 28, 2024

Super Bowl LVIII
Sunday, February 11, 2024
Allegiant Stadium
Las Vegas (CBS)

THE GOAT SAYS GOODBYE

(For Good This Time?)

BY AARON TALLENT

For the second year in a row, Tom Brady announced on Feb. 1 that he was retiring from the NFL. This time, however, he apparently meant it, saying he was done "for good." Even though his 23rd season in the league didn't end how he wanted, with his Tampa Bay Buccaneers losing to the Dallas Cowboys in the wild-card round, it should still be pointed out that he finished the regular season third in passing yards with 4,694, at 45.

So with the greatest quarterback in the history of the game apparently having played his last game, here are what I think are Brady's top five seasons across his legendary career.

5. 2020 – 11-5, NFC WILD CARD, BEAT KANSAS CITY IN SUPER BOWL LV

Brady signed on to a Tampa Bay Buccaneers team that had gone 7-9 the year before. At 43, he threw for 4,633 yards and 40 touchdowns as Tampa Bay earned a No. 5 seed in the playoffs. In the postseason, Brady and the Bucs played their best ball, winning four straight games and the Lombardi Trophy and earning him his seventh Super Bowl ring.

4. 2007 – 16-0, AFC EAST CHAMPS, LOST TO NEW YORK GIANTS IN SUPER BOWL XLII

New England acquired Randy Moss, Wes Welker and Donté Stallworth in the offseason, and Brady showed what he could do with a top-flight receiving corps. He became the first quarterback to throw 50 touchdowns in a year, leading the Patriots to the only 16-0 regular season in NFL history. Only an unbelievable catch by Giants receiver David Tyree in the Super Bowl kept Brady and New England from realizing perfection, but passing-wise, this season is his best.

3. 2003 – 14-2, AFC EAST CHAMPS, BEAT CAROLINA IN SUPER BOWL XXXVIII

After a 2-2 start, Brady led the Patriots to 15 straight wins and won a shootout with Carolina Panthers quarterback Jake Delhomme. As he did against the Rams two years earlier, Brady led a drive in the final seconds that culminated with a game-winning Adam Vinatieri field goal.

2. 2004 – 14-2, AFC EAST CHAMPS, BEAT PHILADELPHIA IN SUPER BOWL XXXIX

The winning streak from 2003 extended to an NFL-record 21 consecutive games as the Patriots won their third Super Bowl in four years. Along the way, Brady threw for 3,692 yards and 28 touchdowns.

1. 2016 14-2, AFC EAST CHAMPS, BEAT ATLANTA IN SUPER BOWL LI

After serving a four-game suspension because of the "Deflategate" scandal, Brady rejoined the team and had one of the finest seasons of his career. He threw 28 touchdowns to only two interceptions and posted a 112.2 passer rating, the second-best number of his career. Oh, and he also led the greatest comeback in NFL history to beat the Atlanta Falcons in Super Bowl LI to earn his fifth ring.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: DAVID BUTLER II-USA TODAY SPORTS; MATTHEW EMMONS-USA TODAY SPORTS; JONATHAN DYER-USA TODAY SPORTS

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